

1034

REFORMATION
OF
MANNERS
PROMOTED
BY
ARGUMENT,
IN
Several ESSAYS,
VIZ.

Of REPROOF. } *Of SWEARING.*
Of DRUNKENNESS. } *Of the LORD'S DAY.*
Of LUST or IMPURITY. }

By SAMUEL WALKER, M. A.
Vicar of Croft in the County of Lincoln.

K.

L O N D O N:

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13

REFORMATION
MANIERS
BY
A. GEMEY
MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

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THE
P R E F A C E.

TH E Design of Refor-
mation is so Reason-
able, Generous, and
Christian, so Beneficial to the
Offender and the Publick, re-
ounds so much to the Glory of
God, is so Commendable in the
Sight of Man, tends so Effe-
ctually to better the present
Age, and gives such Hopes
of an entire Amendment in
the next, that those Magi-
strates must meet with a just
Esteem, who have been Dili-
gent in the due Execution of
the Penal Laws against the
Reigning

The PREFACE.

*Reigning Vices of the Age.
But the Various, and almost
Universal, degenerate Cor-
ruptions of Christians call for
the Wishes, the Prayers, the
Endeavours of all Good and
Compassionate Men; who re-
tain any Sense of the Honour
of God in their Minds, or are
mov'd with any Concern for
the Welfare of Man in their
Hearts. And since every Per-
son hath both a Right and an
Obligation to carry on these
Ends according to his Power,
I cou'd not but think the Of-
fice I have the Happiness and
Honour to be call'd to in the
Church, wou'd sufficiently ju-
stify the Concurrence of my At-
tempts*

giving R

The PREFACE.

tempts to Promote that Design,
by the Strength of Reason, the
Freedom of Reproof, and the
Method of Perswasion, which
others in their Station con-
trive to attain by Pecuniary
Mulcts; that so by Trying all
Ways with Men of different
Tempers, we may be able to
save some. I A . 5119
at the beginning of said
Sure I am, there is more
Safety, more Breeding in keep-
ing the Laws than breaking
them; much more Virtue in
Obeying God from a Principle
of Conscience than a Principle
of Fear. And I am very wil-
ling to hope there is not one
Magistrate throughout the
EHT whole

The PREFACE.

whole Kingdom, that executes
the Laws agaist Immorality
and Prophaneness, purely for
the sake of Punishment: Nay,
I am Inclinalbe to believe, it
wou'd be a particular Joy to
those that bear the Sword, was
the Chastisement of Vice hap-
pily Prevented by the Peoples
Vertue. If I can give any
Ease to Magistrates in the
Discharge of their Duty, and
answer my own by Advancing,
in some Measure, a speedy, sin-
cere Obedience in the Moral
Conduct of Humane Life, I
shall obtain my End; and in the
mean time only desire the Con-
stancy of the Reader's Prayers
for the Success of my Intention.

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Of Reproof.

ESSAY I.

OF REPROOF.

SECT. I.
The Nature of SPIRITUAL FLATTERY
Stated.

A Servile Flattery is one of the clearest Proofs of a sordid Temper, of a base, ignoble Soul: It obliges a Man to Act and Discourse with a perfect Violence to his Judgment and Inclinations. And for this Reason, tho' Many practise it, yet None are willing to own themselves guilty of it. The Consequences of this Vice have been very Fatal; For by this, we receive a false View of our selves, an

B over-

overweening Opinion of our own Merits, and esteem the *Worst* of Enemies. By such a soothing and insinuating way, Men dive into our Tempers and Secrets, and so gain an Opportunity of *Exposing* our Failings, and *Undermining* our Designs. The Histories of most Kingdoms and the Experience of all Ages, let us see, how the Best of Men and the Best of Princes have been betray'd, and ruin'd by such Admirers. And therefore, tho' *Self-Love* is ready to plead very strongly in its Behalf, *Common Prudence* shou'd engage us to brow-beat Parasites and be upon our Guard.

If the *Effects* had been confin'd only to *Temporal Losses*, there had been Sufficient reason for *Complaints* and *Caution*. But when we are in danger of being *Deceiv'd* in matters of the highest Moment, in things of an *Everlasting Concern*, then, then we are wounded in the most sensible and tender Part. When mis-applied Civility will not suffer Fellow-Creatures to remind one another of their Errors for Fear of Disobliging; when *infamous Vices*, instead of a gentle Rebuke, shall be palliated with *New Names* or softned with *false*

Of Reproof.

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false Praises; When Peace, Peace shall be cried, tho' at the same time it is believ'd, there is no Peace; What Treachery can deserve a higher Resentment?

The Nature of this Vice may be comprehended under these two Heads. 1st. The Destroying the *Distinctions* between Good and Evil, by giving new specious names of Goodness to real Vices. And, 2dly, The *Applying* these false Notions to particular Persons, thereby giving them a false View of themselves. In the *One Case* false Notions are advanced, and the World left at Liberty to poyson themselves with them: In the *Other Case* there is a treacherous Application of the wicked Notions we find or form to the Distruktion of our Friend. In Both Cases there are provoking Circumstances and Degrees of Guilt, and we become truly Guilty of Spiritual Flattery.

First, The Nature of this Crime implies, The Destroying the *Distinctions* between Good and Evil, by giving New Specious Names of Goodness to real Vices.

It were to be wished our Unhappiness had not been so Great, as to find some Transgressors in our Age exactly Parallel to those old Sinners in the Prophet's Days, against whom an heavy Woe is pronounc'd in *Isai.* v. 20. *Woe unto them that call Evil Good, and Good Evil; that put Darkness for Light, and Light for Darkness; that put Bitter for Sweet, and Sweet for Bitter.* But amongst us, alas ! there are too many, who with Boldness and Weakness deny the *Eternal Distinctions* of Good and Evil, and assert, that all Actions were indifferent, till the positive Laws of Governours made the Distinction. And yet (which is worse than this, because the Mischief is the more Extensive) too many there are, who acknowledge their obligations to Natural Religion, who have moreover been Baptiz'd into the Christian Faith, and do still profess to believe every Part of the Gospel; that can deaden the Power of Religion in their Lives, and flatter themselves, and lead others into Labyrinths of Errour and real Acts of Disobedience, by colouring the Vices, they have a Mind to favour under the *Masque* of Goodness, and those Vertues to which they have some Resemblance and Affinity.

'Tis

'Tis very common to see *Real Covetousness* carried on under the *Pretence* of Prudence, Frugality, Providing for their Own, and avoiding the Character of being worse than an Infidel. *Prodigality* is esteem'd the Effect of a *Charitable* and *Generous Spirit*. And *Uncharitableness excus'd* from the World's *Ignorance* of their *Worldly Circumstances*, and the strict *Regard* they have to *Justice*. Drunkenness is stiled *Good Fellowship*; Swearing, *Genteel Breeding*; Revenge, Courage; and Duelling, Honour. Smooth *Immodesty* is the *Excursion* of a Ready *Wit*. And to Go beyond and Defraud our Brother is call'd *Sense* and *Policy*.

We see then, that *Errorr* seldom goes abroad without the *Appearances* of *Truth*, and that some great *Truths* have been made use of to Introduce the most *Pernicious Errorrs*. And from hence we cannot but conclude, that whoever is the Author or Promoter of such Principles, whether his Belief be answerable to his Principles, or his Practice suitable to his Belief, he does however in the Ears of the People, *call Evil Good*; and, in effect, says unto the Wicked, *Thou art Righteous*.
Secondly,

Secondly, This Vice consists in Applying false Notions of Good and Evil, to the Actions of Particular Persons, and thereby giving them a false View of themselves.

Altho' Man be *his own* great Deceiver by false Perswasions and favourable Constructions: Yet he is frequently Deceiv'd by Intimate *Acquaintance*, and under the pretended Shew of real Friendship. Whatever the Humours, Words, Actions, or Changes of some be, there are too many to be found, Commending their Tempers, Applauding what they Do, Saying as they Say, and Varying as they Vary. There can be nothing so Ill-Natur'd, but such will excuse and perhaps commend it. Provoking Expressions of *Incivility* shall be cry'd up for *Courage* and *Wit*, and voluntary Passions soften'd with the poor Pretence of *Natural Temper*, and meaning no Harm. Let a Person commit Actions impious with respect to God, unjust and uncharitable to his Neighbour, and contrary to that Sobriety and Purity which is due to himself, they will cast such a Mist before his Eyes, that to himself he shall not appear to be what he really is. Either they are Represented

presented to be no Sins at all, or very small Ones; Overlook'd to be sure by a Merciful God, and may be Repented of when they please. Some Circumstances are invented as specious Pleas and colourable Excuses to extenuate the Guilt they cannot deny, as, The pleading of Ignorance, a sudden Surprize, and transferring the Blame upon others, tho' at the same time they believe it was his own voluntary Act, committed against Knowledge and with Deliberation. If they cannot Deceive him into a falsely good Opinion of himself this way, then perhaps they pick out some Vertues which he really has, and give them an extravagant Encomium, extol them to the Clouds, to swallow up the other Errors and Vices of his Life. By such base Insinuations of Treacherous Companions, his very *Deformities* shall be turn'd into *Perfections*, and that Action to *His Apprehension* esteem'd an Excellency, which in strict Propriety is a Reproach and Blemish of Humane Nature.

Now, how low soever *Charity* may run, every Person ought to have so much Regard to *Truth*, as in no Case to speak Contrary to what he Thinks.

This is a Principle which Universally binds all Persons, at all Times, and in all Places. And if the Offender, whom we have describ'd, will not be so *Charitable*, as to tell his Offending Companion, he has Done what he ought not to have Done ; he ought not to be so *False* as to Say, he has done Well, when he knows he has done very much Amiss. If he will not tell the Covetous of his *Sordid Tenaciousness*, he ought not to call it a *Prudent Provision*. If he will not accuse the Prodigal of *Extravagance*, his swelling his Expence above his Income, shou'd not assume the Name of *Generosity*. If he will not Read a Lecture of *Charity* to the Unmerciful, the *Robbing the Poor* of their Right shou'd not be stiled *Innocent Frugality*. If he will not *Reprove* the wretchedly Prophane, he shou'd not *Commend* his sawcy Irreverence, and cry it up for Wit. If he will not check *Immodest Glances*, he shou'd not approve of them under the Notion of *Harmless jesting*.

Not to do the *Former* of these is heinously Sinful ; but to be Guilty of the *Latter* is such an aggravating Crime as I know not how to Express. 'Tis an exact Copy of the Devil's first Stratagem in *Paradise*,

Paradise, a True Imitation of those Deceivers, those Hunters of Souls, those Daubers with Untemper'd Mortar, of whom God so Justly Complains by several of his Prophets. With what Astonishment doth God Speak of a Crime of this Nature in Jer. v. 30, 31. A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the Land; The Prophets prophesy falsely, and the Priests bear Rule by their Means, and my People love to have it so: And what will you do in the End thereof?

S E C T. II.

The General Odium justly attending SPIRITUAL FLATTERY.

This kind of Offence ought to be receiv'd with a general Odium, as it mightily redounds to the Injury of those particular Persons whom they thus Deceive.

I believe there is frequently a Vexation in every Man, at being Impos'd upon in any kind; Imposition supposing Ignorance and Injury. And according to the degrees of the Injury, and the importance of the Consequences, the more close,

close, and strong, and lasting will the *Vexation* prove. When a Man speaks one thing to his Neighbour, and intends the contrary, plays fast and loose till he brings him into a Noose, and goes beyond and defrauds him, even in *Temporal Affairs* and Cases of a Worldly Concernment; his *Passions* are very much *Raised* upon this occasion, he judges his *Resentment* highly *Just*, claps a *Mark* upon such a Person, and thinks the *Avoiding* his Conversation a necessary part of *Prudence*. Thus and much worse affected wou'd be his Mind, (I am sure it ought) towards the Base *Underminers* of his happy *Immortality*, if he set as great a Value upon his *Soul* as he does upon his *Estate*, and places *Heaven* before this *World* in his Esteem and Affections.

From these Principles the People will have reason to curse the Time that ever they knew, that ever they convers'd with such a Kind of Men. Because they have given them a *False View* of themselves. Because they lay the Foundation of a *Dangerous* and *Unreasonable Pride*. And, because they are conducted to a state of *Damnation* under the vain Hopes of *Everlasting Peace*.

First,

First, Because they have given them a False View of themselves.

As it is one of the most *Useful* and *Necessary*; so 'tis one of the *Harshest* things in the World for a Man truly to *Know Himself*, the State and Condition of his Soul. So much must be acknowledg'd as an undoubted Truth upon the Bare Supposal of *Our Own Darkness, Infirmitie, and Partiality.* But these Difficulties do mightily increase, when the Designs of such *Insnaring Friends* are put into the Balance. For *They endeavour to give Mankind a False View of themselves, and that False View mix'd with such an Unreasonable Degree of Partial Affection, as always Inclines them to the too Favourable Judgment of their own Actions.*

Now, as the Apostle argues, Gal. vi. 3. *If a Man think himself to be Something, when he is Nothing, he Deceiveth himself.* And the Consequences of this *Moral Deceit* must needs be Fatal. For to be in a State of Sin, and not to confess it to God Almighty, to be deeply Involv'd in Guilt, and not to Mourn and be Humbled for it; to labour under Great Mistakes, and not to Rectifie such Errours;

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rours ; to continue in a Course of Disobedience, without a Resolution of future Amendment ; must be a Condition undoubtedly so Wretched, as no Experience of Worldly Misfortunes can justly Parallel. And yet this is the *Truth* of the Case. For how shall they confess that which they do not believe to be a Sin ? And how shall they bewail their Guilt, who are taught they are truly Innocent ? And how shall those Errours be rectified which they do not clearly Perceive ? And how shall they be induc'd to amend their Lives, when they think they have done nothing amiss ? And how shall they go on unto Perfection, when they imagine they are *Christians* good enough already, and need not be better ?

"Tis not only highly Becoming, but absolutely Necessary even for all particular Persons to examine, How far *They* have contributed to their own Blindness and Ignorance herein. But as for *Those* People, who, by a Flattery as *Mean* as it is *Dangerous*, Work into the Minds of their Companions such kind of Vain Thoughts, so Groundless a Belief, they cannot hold them in too great a Disdain. Because the Heart hereby is Harden'd against

against present Sorrow for past Crimes, and the Hopes of future Reformation prevented. And what Indignation can be of too high a Strain for those, who Poison, and Stab, and Murder, as it were, the Souls of Men? When a Person says unto the Wicked, Thou art Righteous, the Wicked may be induc'd to think himself Righteous; and he, that thinks himself Righteous, tho' he be really Wicked, will never think of turning from his Wicked Way; and he that contrives to put him into such a Wicked Course of Life, as very probably he will never Repent of, has done him the greatest Injury that he is capable of receiving. And all this is the *Natural Effect* of giving the People a *False View* of themselves.

Secondly, The People will have Reason to curse the Time that ever they knew, that ever they convers'd with such kind of Men, Because they Lay the Foundation of a *Dangerous and Unreasonable Pride.*

Were there not so *Many* Obsequious Tempers as there are, of a truth there wou'd be *Less* Pride than there is. For how prone soever we are of our selves

to

to entertain an Overweening Opinion of our own Merits, such Persons serve to Blow up these *Latent Sparks* into a Flame, and extravagantly swell the close and selfish Lurkings in our Hearts. Thus (tho' Strange we shou'd) we Strut, Look Big, and Over-look, and Grow Conceited, from the Poor, and Thin, and Noisy, and Designing, Applauses of Fools and Flatterers, and expect the World to Pay a Slavish Obeisance and Submission to our Tempers and Judgments. And (which is Stranger yet) these Lofty Thoughts are raised from no real Foundation, excited only from Perfections in bare Fancies and Imaginations, meer Chimara's, Fictions, and Delusions.

Indeed had a Person all the Accomplishments which *Art* and *Nature*, and *Grace* cou'd Furnish him with, was he never so Ingenious, so Noble, so Wise, so Beautiful, so Virtuous, or so Rich, *the Apostle's Argument*, i Cor. iv. 7. *What hast thou, O Man, that thou didst not Receive,* does sufficiently expose the Unreasonablenes of being Proud of them. But when he Boasts of Perfections which he has not, of Vertues which he really wants, and Glories upon

on such Occasions as seen in their proper Colours, wou'd make him justly ashamed ; no Excuse can possibly be framed for such an intolerable piece of Arrogance. And certainly of this unsufferable Nature must that Pride be, which is caused by such Flatterets, as Say *Unto the Wicked, Thou art Righteous.* Under the Power of a Deluded Imagination he proceeds, nursing up a Fancy much like that Vaunt of the Church of Laodicea, Rev. iii. 17. *Thou Sayest, I am Rich and Increased with Goods, and have need of Nothing, and Knowest not that thou art Wretched, and Miserable, and Poor, and Blind, and Naked.*

Now no One can or ought to Entertain any other Opinion besides what is Mean and Detestable of such, as excite in the Mind a Crime so Dangerous in all respects. *For Pride goeth before Destruction, and a Haughty Spirit before a Fall.* Prov. xvi. 18. Which is clearly verified, as to Life, Estate, Virtue, Peace, and Happiness. By various Ways it tendeth to Poverty, and sendeth many Men into the other World much sooner than either God or Nature ever design'd ; Multiplies, and at the same time from our own Knowledge Conceals our Defects ; Sets

us

us above Reproof and Instruction, Embroils Churches, Kingdoms, and Families, gives an ungrateful Turn in Conversation to Words and Actions, and renders us *Uneasy* to our selves, *Unacceptable* to others, and *Odious* to God; whose Providence has been Remarkable in the pulling down of the Proud and Lofty. Not to mention the Debasing of the High and Mighty in other Instances, which might be Gather'd from Examples both in Heaven and Earth. There is a very eminent Example in the New Testament of One, whose extravagant Conceit rais'd by Flattery, was visibly punish'd in the Sight of Men. For Herod's Oration had not met with the Divine Judgment, if the flattering Crowd had not abus'd the Unhappy Prince, and given that Blasphemous Encomium to his Speech, *It is the Voice of a God, and not of a Man.* Acts xii. 21, 22, 23.

Thirdly and Lastly, The People will have Reason to curse the Time that ever they knew, that ever they convers'd with such a kind of Men, because they are conducted to a State of Damnation, under the vain Hopes of Everlasting Peace.

When

When they come to Die and are brought before the Tribunal of God, Oh ! The fatal Surprize to find, that God Judgeth not as Man Judgeth, that they are like to that foolish Builder, that Built his House upon the Sand, and, when the Rains descended, and the Flouds came, and the Winds blew, and Beat upon that House, it immediately Fell, and great was the Fall thereof. If we be so Easy as to give way to Flatterers, and so Credulous as to believe the Sentences of their Mouths, not only Without but Against the Dictates of the Almighty, and go on expecting Eternal Happiness upon no solid Foundation ; the great and notable Day of the Lord will set us free from our Mistake, and by a contrary Experience discover to us the Vanity of our Hope. In such a case our whole Lives are nothing else but a Dream and a Delusion, and we meet with the usual Disappointment of such a State. For as Is. xxix. 8. When a hungry Man Dreameth, and behold he Eateth, but he awaketh, and his Soul is Empty ; Or as when a thirsty Man Dreameth, and behold he Drinketh, but he Awaketh, and behold he is Faint, and his Soul hath Appetite : Even so a wicked Man, Buoy'd up with a Notion of being Righteous,

Righteous, walks about this World Dreaming of Happiness when he Dies, but when the Night is far Spent, nay Gone, and the Day is not only near but appeareth, behold his Hope proves Empty and Vain, and he sees himself clearly as he is, and finds his Expectation most miserably Deceiv'd. The promis'd Comfort disappears, all that was told him proves to be False, Affairs stand quite otherwise than he imagin'd, his treacherous Peace is turn'd into everlasting Sorrow, and he receives too late a Conviction of the fatal Discourses of his pretended Friends.

With what an unhappy Mixture of woful Passions must now his Breast continually be Rack'd? When he sees his Judges Smiles turn'd into Frowns of Terrour, and hears the Sentence of *Come ye Blessed*, to his *Surprize*, on a sudden chang'd into *Go ye Cursed*, how can he avoid being angry with himself for lending an *Ear* and giving up his *Time* to the Discourses of those, who spake to him *Smooth Things*, who *Prophesy'd Deceits*? When the Sense of Insupportable, Endless Miseries press hard upon him, and Hell he is conducted to instead of Heaven, how can he with sufficient Indignation reflect on the Instruments

ments of his Condition? Encompass'd with Bitterness he may justly Curse the Betrayers of his Soul. Here no Passion can Exceed, no Expression be too Sharp, no Resentment carry'd too High. Then the mispent Time will spring up in his Mind, and his credulous Temper be Self-condemn'd, and the poisonous Principles which he Imbib'd with Pleasure brought to his Remembrance, and whatever pass'd in Conversation with his Companions, come fresh into his Thoughts, and every Reflection gives new occasion to curse his own Weakness and their Treachery, and sets a keen Edge upon his Enslaved and Enraged Soul.

And if *They* be in the same Place of Torment (which there is abundant Reason to fear) perpetual Reproaches will be an *Additional* Torment to what they Endure. 'Twill be natural to alledge by way of Exclamation, If it had not been for *You*, *I* had been Happy; had *You* been Silent, *I* had never heard the Groanings of this Place; whatever now *My* Sufferings are, *Your* Treachery has brought me to them; Where's the Happiness you *Vainly* Promis'd? Why do you not *Secure* to me what you once pro-

C 2 pos'd?

pos'd? Alas, all Your Words, Unhappy I
find worse than empty Sounds; my
Hopes are utterly Perish'd, by your
means, I am doom'd to this Anguish,
Ruin'd, Lost, Undone, and that for
Ever. Railing indeed, how Just soever the
Occasion may be, is poor Comfort under
Misfortunes, where there is no Remedy.
But Poor as it is, it evidently
shews, not only how Justly the People
might in this World, but how Certainly
they will in the Next, curse the Tongue
of him, That saith unto the Wicked, Thou
art Righteous. There may be concur-
ring Causes, which, during this State,
Blind the Vision of the Soul, and Byass
the present Judgment of Persons; but
the Eyes of All hereafter will be Open'd,
and Damnation join'd with the Loss of
their imaginary Heaven, will force the
Tongue to condemn the Author of the
Cheat.

S E C T. III.

*The Necessary Duty of a Reproving Call
Urg'd.*

Many Words need not be used in laying before our Understandings the Nature of this Duty. For to rebuke a Man, is, not only to tell him sincerely and freely that in general he has acted contrary to his Duty, but to lay the Matter so home to his Conscience, as to name the particular instances wherein he has Offended, and the Express Laws he has heinously Transgress'd. When this is done, nothing farther is requir'd but to let him know what are the evil Consequences of his Present State, how much worse his Condition will be if he *Goes on* to Offend, and to direct and persuade with all Mildness and Prudence to a Better Obedience,

Now as to the Obligations we lie under to the Use of this necessary Freedom of Discourse, they are many and powerful. For doubtless with no other Design did God Indue us with the Privilege of Speech, but to Speak the Truth from our Hearts, and to Discourse and Converse

for the Good and Benefit of each other. This undeniable End, join'd with that *Love* which is due to our Brethren, are engaging Motives to talk without Reserve in all material Cases wherein we are Mutually and Eternally concern'd. For upon these Grounds *That* must needs be an *Unwarrantable Silence*, which prevails upon us to see our Neighbours, Friends, or Companions Sin on Presumptuously, and let them Proceed and Perish *without Rebuke.*

As these are strong Arguments from Natural Reason to use this Freedom of Reproving; so our Reproof for the same Reasons ought to be so guided as to Strike against those Sins to which Men are found to be the most addicted. For general Discourses cannot possibly be so Useful, do a Quarter of that Good, as Close Applications in particular Cases. One necessary Principle laid home to the Heart, is better than twenty wide Notions made clear to the Head. To represent to a Person in lively Characters the Evil and Danger of the Sin he Loves, will truly tend to the Benefit of the Soul. Whereas in comparison to this, it may be esteem'd little else than Loss of Breath, or a vain Amusement,

to

to Declaim against such Sins to any one, as he hath neither *Inclination* nor *Temptation* to commit. This shews the Expediency; the Necessity of Applying our selves directly to the Consciences of Men, and taking the Freedom to Oppose and Correct the Vices Peculiar to the Places where we Live, and the Persons with whom we Converse.

Nay farther, the *Fear of God*, and *Reverence* for his Express Revealed Laws, may be added to this *Use of Speech* and *Love of Mankind*, and more than presum'd as an *Additional Enforcement* to lay this Duty more strongly upon Conscience. And if any Regard be moreover had to those Illustrious *Examples* which we are bound to Imitate, and which recommend an Obedience to the Commands of God with an Heroick Zeal and Constancy, we must be provok'd to go and do Likewise.

The very *Pharisees* gave this Character of our Saviour, Mat. xxii. 16. *Master, we know that thou art True, and teachest the Way of God in Truth, neither carrest thou for any Man; for thou regardest not the Person of Men.* And the Character was exactly verified by the particular

Discourses and Actions of his Life. For so far was he from *Smothering* the Truth for fear of Man, that he *Boldly* Rebuked Vice in Persons of the Highest Authority. He incurr'd indeed the Peoples Hatred and the Rulers Malice, who were uneasy upon being disturb'd in a Vicious Course. But he would not be so *False* to his God, so *Treacherous* to Man, as to forbear to Testifie of the World that the Deeds thereof were Evil, and to tell the governing and prevailing part of the Nation of the unwarrantable Glosses put upon the Law, and the detestable Hypocrify they were provokingly Guilty of before God.

The Gospel informs us, *Mark vi.* That *Herod* the Tetrarch had a very great Opinion of *John the Baptist*, that he *Fear'd* him, *knowing* he was a *Just and Holy Man*, that he *Observ'd* him, and when he *Heard* him, did many things and *Heard* him Gladly. Yet Favour and Respect, tho' Particular and Engaging, did not *Byass* the Judgment, nor *Divert* the Admonition of the Moving Preacher, but he must tell his Kind *Admirer* of his *Favourite Vice*, of the Unlawfulness of his *Incestuous Marriage*, tho' it was attended with a fatal Consequence by the close, but

but not unusual Malice of a provoked Wanton.

When S. Paul, *Act^s xxiv.* was brought before *Felix* the Roman Governour, the Sense of his being a *Prisoner* at the Bar, did not at all change his familiar Conference with his *Judge*, but he freely Touch'd upon the known and prevailing Vices of his Life. *Josephus* gives a particular Account of his tempting *Drusilla* from her Marriage Bed and Succeeding in that Attempt; *Tacitus* mentions his cruel Oppression in the Province, and the Scriptures hint to us one Part of this Character from his Expectation of Bribes for the Releaseament of *Paul*. The Sense of these things made this Great Apostle Discourse of *Justice* and *Chastity*, and a strict *Account* to be given for the Breach of these Duties, that so *Felix* might be sensible of his Great Oppression and Adulterous Marriage. And sensible indeed he was to a very high Degree of Commotion upon this Powerful Sermon, which excited at the same time the strong Conviction of his own Conscience. For as he reason'd of Righteousness, Temperance and Judgment to come, *Felix Trembled*.

Upon

Upon mentioning Examples of this Nature, I would not have our Minds give way to mistaken and erroneous Suggestions, as, That the Stations and Circumstances of these Persons are different from those of common Christians; That the Liberty they took and the Examples they set are beyond our Imitation, and that the Order of the Clergy are only concern'd in following such an Illustrious Extensive Freedom. Because tho' the Ministers of *Christ* are principally concern'd in observing these Examples, and may and ought to use this Freedom in such a largeness of Extent, and by such different Ways in some Cases, as is Unlawful for Lay-*Christians* to Assume and Follow: Yet in all common Duties and Virtues, in all Acts of Worship and Charity, we are without Exception universally obliged to set our Saviour and his Apostles as Patterns before us, and exactly Copy after the Examples they have given us. Now, since the Duty of Reproving universally Binds, tho' in different Measures according to the different Circumstances of *Christians*, every *Christian* is oblig'd to use the same Freedom they us'd, so far as his Friendship and Authority reaches, and where he is Encouraged upon due Deliberation with

with the Hopeful Prospect of Success.

Now, from the *Nature* of Rebuking and the *Obligations* to it, I am led to Observe and Infer, The Guilt of *Unchristian Silence*, which some, who wou'd be thought *Prudent Christians* but are rather *Worldly Wise*, do unhappily fall into under the Pretence and Maïque of *Innocency*. For *Silence* is too commonly thought in *No Case* to be a *Crime*, and *Speaking* in *Several Cases* to be an *Offence*; whereas in *This Case* Both are very Pernicious *Errors*. Without Regard to *Charity*, we find the World very Cautious of speaking what they really think of one another. But certainly *Reproof*, Harsh and Ungrateful as it may seem to be, rightly Circumstantiated, is so Essentially *Correspondens* to the Obligations of *Christians*, that we cannot Live fuitably to our Profession without it. If any Regard be to be had to the true Use of *Speech*, if any Bowels of *Compassion* be to be shewn to Man, if any *Obedience* be to be paid to the Will and Commands of God, if the Shining *Examples* of *Christ* and his *Apostles*, and the Best *Christians* that are or have been in the World, be worthy of Imitation, all these with a *Conspiring*

Conspiring Force, with Unanimous Voices call upon us to Cry Aloud and Spare not, and Lift up our Voices like a Trumpet, and Shew those People their Transgressions, who fall within the Reach of our Care, our Friendship, and our Authority.

Having then these Obligations, let us no longer *Smother* our Thoughts, nor tie up our Tongues in Silence, upon any *Selfish* or Temporal Accounts; but proceed, as we ought and where we shou'd, to Persuade, to Direct, to Exhort, and Reprove. Here the *Refraining* of our Lips is so far from being either *Wise* or *Good*, that it is the *Betraying* of the Souls of our Friends, our Children, our Servants, Committed to our Trust. We make our selves accountable for their Crimes, become *Partakers* of their Sins, and if they Die in their *Iniquity*, God hath expressly Said, their *Blood* he will Require at our *Hands*. Whoso hath *Christian* Knowledge and *Christian* Faith, and sees his Brother following such Courses as he perceives and believes to be provoking to the Almighty, and prejudicial to the everlasting Interest of his Soul, and doth not warn him of his Wicked

Wicked Way, how Dwelleth the Love
either of God or Man in him?

These, methinks, are dismal Considerations, and shou'd Sink deep into our Souls, and will, I hope, at once Awaken and Convince us all.

S E C T. IV.

How a Reprover ought to be Qualify'd.

ONE or more of these Qualifications seem to be requisite to this End, Authority, Friendship, Judgment, Temper, and Goodness.

First, There must be some kind of Authority, either Natural, Civil, or Spiritual, to usher in a well Qualified Reproving Call. A Son Honoureth his Father, and a Servant his Master, saith the Prophet, Mal. i. 6. Every Soul is to be Subject to the Higher Powers, and Obedience is made a Duty to those who Watch for our Souls as those who must give an Account, saith St. Paul, Rom. XIII. 1. and Heb. xiii. 17. And therefore a Father, a Master, a Magistrate, and a Minister may Reprove Wickedness, and Call

How

Call upon Men with more Hopes of being candidly Heard and Regarded than Inferiours or Equals. The Sense of that Honour and Submission which Nature and Religion has affix'd to Persons in those Relative Capacities, give Weight and Strength, Reverence and Regard, to what they Dictate, tho' it be in a Corrective Way. When a *Solomon* Ascends and Speaks from the Throne, when a *Moses* Lifts up his Voice to Admonish, Exhort, and Rebuke, the People generally clap their Hands upon their Mouths and attentively Listen. Such within the Precincts of their respective Authority, may do God, their Country, their Brethren, their Religion, Signal Service with mighty Success, with little or no Offence. And therefore by the way, *Silence in Them*, when the Calls for Reformation are Just and Loud, must be so Aggravating as to admit of no Excuse.

Secondly, As Authority, so Friendship is another considerable Qualification in a Reprover, to render his particular way of Calling the more acceptable to his Hearers. For as *Intimacy* gives us an Opportunity of observing, not only the Excellencies but *Failings*, the Defects as well

well as Perfections, of our Friend : So this way of Conversation will afford us a proper Time to speak of them to better Advantage, than any others are capable of doing. For we can take such a time to mention them, when they are at the greatest Leisure, when they are in the coolest Temper, and all other Circumstances promise fair for a Candid Hearing and a Speedy Amendment. And Oh ! How happy, happy wou'd it be, if Strict Friendships were improv'd to such Noble Purposes.

Thirdly, An Adviser or Reprover ought to be qualified with Judgment and Temper, was well as Authority and Friendship. With Judgment. Because the Duty, in which he is engaged, is a Point so nice in abundance of material Circumstances, that the least Omission in any Part frustrates the most honest and sincere Intention. And therefore he must have a clear Head, be a Man of a sagacious Mind, and discerning Spirit, whose Talent enables him to take so right a Compass in this Matter, as to afford a reasonable Prospect of a comfortable Issue. And

And what a *Kind* of Temper will be the most suitable to this End, is not very difficult to discover and lay down.

Not a *Peevish* and *Passionate* Temper, taking Fire at every little Offence. Because such a Treatment proceeds from a Nature so Haughty and Imperious, as exasperates sooner than reforms, and makes us uneasy at the same time it promotes neither the Honour of God nor the Good of our Brother.

But on the contrary, *Meekness* and *Humility* are very prevailing Qualities. There is an engaging Power in a winning Mildness and a calm Concern. For this way of Address is becoming one Creature and *Christian* towards another, gains *Attention* and *Love*, and melts down the Heart to a ready Obedience.

He is indeed a very happy Man, who has this Command over his Passions, when his Heart is Hot within him for God's Glory and at Man's Impiety; He is a very happy Man certainly, who, when Prudence requires, can refrain as it were from Speaking, though it be

Pain

Pain and Grief unto him. But, since such a Command is an Excellent Perfection in itself, and more than probable the most Effectual to govern the unruly Wills and Affections of Sinful Men, Wisdom and Charity are prevailing Motives upon us all to endeavour the Attainment of such a Command.

Fourthly, The last Qualification requisite in a Reprover, to render his particular way of Calling the more acceptable to his Hearers, is Goodness. And this Crowns all the rest, and will Pierce the deepest into the Mind and Heart. For he, who sets up for a Reformer of the World, for the sake of others as well as his own Salvation, stands need to be very Regular himself, and abstain, not only from real Evil, but as far as possible from all Appearance of Evil. The World is quick-sighted, and a wicked World hates to be reprov'd, and this makes them wonderfully inquisitive after the Character of him who opposes their Vices, and makes them also apt to swell pardonable Imprudences into aggravating Crimes. And if any real Errour be found in the Conduct of his Life, and the Man be addicted to any one particular Vice, the Sinner begins to think he

may proceed in his Wickedness, secure from Reproof, when he is able to re-crminate in Kind, and stop the Reformer's Mouth with an irregular Action of his own.

Such a serious and reasonable Sense of things occasion'd our Saviour to lay down the following Directions in his Eternal Gospel, as Standing Rules to be observ'd by his Disciples in all Ages. *Mat. vii. 3, 4, 5.* *Why beholdest thou the Mote that is in thy Brother's Eye, but considerest not the Beam that is in thine own Eye? Or, how wilt thou say to thy Brother, Let me pull out the Mote out of thine Eye; and behold a Beam is in thine own Eye? Thou Hypocrite, first cast out the Beam out of thine own Eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the Mote out of thy Brother's Eye.*

Now by the Elegant Resemblances here made use of, our Lord and Master clearly conveys to our Minds, and closely offers to our Practice, these Moral Instructing Truths. *First,* That it is highly unreasonable to pass an inward unmerciful Judgment upon Sinners, when we are guilty of greater Faults our selves; *Why beholdest thou the*

the Mote that is in thy Brother's Eye, but considerest not the Beam that is in thine own Eye? Secondly, That we cannot surely, with any Face or Conscience, take upon us outwardly to reprove others, whilst we need a higher Amendment; How wilt thou say to thy Brother, Let me pull out the Mote out of thine Eye, and behold a Beam is in thine own Eye? Thirdly, That we must first begin to reform our own Lives, before we can hope to proceed in reforming other Men's Errours with Success; First cast out the Beam out of thine own Eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the Mote out of thy Brother's Eye.

Doubtless the Admonitions, the Exhortations, the Rebukes of those, who let their Light so shine before Men, that they may see their Good Works, who prove the Value of an Immortal Soul by the particular care they take of their own, will upon that account be highly regarded and favourably heard. By this means they will be thought to be in Earnest and Sincere, that they believe what they say when they observe what they prescribe, that they tell us the Truth, and wish us well.

And then we shall be induced, not only to hear their Advice, but to follow their Examples, and by a pious Imitation join together to *Glorifie* our *Father which is in Heaven*. This is the way to gain upon a vicious Age: Whilst good Instructions from a wicked Man do rather raise *Doubtings* in the Mind concerning Truth, than *Resolutions* of Obedience in the Heart. And if we do not find in our selves these Qualifications I have mention'd, the best Method in this case would be to recommend this charitable Office to those who are fitter for it.

S E C T.

S E C T. V.

Other Directions towards the Success of a REBUKING FREEDOM.

A Reprover is oblig'd to consider the *Character, Circumstances, and Dispositions* of the Person he reproves; not to *Mis-time* the Reproof; to do it in as *Private* a Manner as is possible; to have no other *End* than a constant aim at the *Reformation* of the Offender, and yet not to be always *Chiding* neither; and to *Pray* to God for Direction and Success.

First, A Reprover is to consider the *Character, Circumstances, and Dispositions* of the Person he reproves. For in the Discharge of this Duty we must copy after the Example of St. Paul, who *i Cor. ix. 22. made himself all things to all Men, that he might by all means save some.* We must not, cannot suppose this Great Apostle to be of a servile Temper by the Observation of this Rule, or to mean a flattering Application to the various and shifting Changes and Dispositions of Mankind. But he walk'd in *Wisdom* towards them that were without, and has taught us the Lesson of using different

Arguments and Methods with different Persons to carry on the same End. Divine Providence has made so visible a Disparity in the Stations, Perfections, Tempers, and Endearments of the World, that, if we intend to work up a Frame of Goodness, much more if we hope to rebuke with Success, the same manner of Addressing and Reproving must not be us'd promiscuously to all.

When *Nathan* was sent by God himself to reprove *David* for his Adultery and Murder, the sense of a Divine Commission did not destroy the Maxims of Prudence, nor cause the Prophet with a blunt unbecoming Rudeness to tell his Sovereign directly of his Sins: But he treats him as a King, and by an excellent Parable, adapted to the Occasion, gains the consenting *Resentment* of the Prince's Mind, before he comes up to the close Application of *ii Sam. xii. Thou art the Man.* We find this Method observ'd by a Greater than he, who was stiled *More than a Prophet.* For how plain soever our Saviour was in many Cases, he condescended to manage the World in a manner suitable to the various Dispositions he met with, and particularly made use of *Parables* in reproving

ving the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, pitching upon that Way as the *least Offensive* and the *most Convincing*. The Imitation of such Examples by *Christians* at this Day, cannot justly be interpreted soothing up Persons of Authority and Figure, or betraying an unworthy Fear of their Power, or entertaining a softening Opinion of their Vices; since it is only effecting that End by *Respect* and *Civility*, which *unpolisb'd Applications* may aim at indeed, but without Success.

The Result of my Argument engages us to regard, whether the Reproved Person, as to his *Station*, be a Superior or Inferior; whether as to his *Temper* he be mild or obstinate; whether as to his *Affections* to us, he be a Friend or an Enemy. For every one of these Circumstances must be weigh'd in the Balance by a Wife Rebuking *Christian*, who intends God a Service, and a Benefit to his Neighbour. Some are to be reproved *Directly*, and some by *Hints*, one *Mildly*, and another again *Roughly*, these with abundance of *Caution*, and all in a manner *Kind*, *Civil*, and *Obliging*.

Secondly, A Reprover is to use such a Consideration, as not to *Mis-time* the Reproof.

In some Cases it may be necessary to reprove even at the *Time* of the Commission of the Crime. Because then the Conviction may be the more sensible and strong, and no Opportunity in the least offer'd of contradicting the Matter of Fact. And thus our Saviour's casting *his Eye* by way of corrective Remembrance upon St. Peter, at the very time of the Crowning of the Cock, *Luke xxii. 61.* touch'd the Heart of the Apostle with the warm Feeling of his treacherous Denial, and made him *go out and weep bitterly.*

But in *most* Cases it may seem expedient, to allow a kind of respiting *Distantce* between the Offence and the Rebuke. Because the Nature of the Crime may be such, as to take away the *Cleanness* and *Coolness* of the Sinner's Temper, and then 'tis impossible we should be heard, or meet with any thing but a brutish Answer. Vain and imprudent wou'd it be to reprove a Man for Drunkenness when he was actually Drunk, since provoking Expressions may be reasonably

sonably expected from his stupified Mind, and his inflamed Blood and Spirits. Repeated Curses are indeed the rash, but yet too common, Returns, when we unseasonably check a Prophane Swearer and Blaspheming Wretch. And to be angry with a Man in his Fit of Rage, instead of *appeasing Wrath*, only adds Passion to Passion, and creates a *double Madness*.

To Men in these and the like Circumstances Silence is the most discreet; and we may *innocently* use those Words which *Fælix* from a wrong Intention spoke to St. Paul, *Acts xxiv. 25.* *Go thy way for this time, when I have a convenient season I will call for thee.* For certainly the *Delay* cannot weaken the Strength of the Cause, nor *lessen* the Heinousness of the Fact, but add much to the Success of the Reproof and the Reformation of the Offender.

Thirdly, Another Circumstance requisite to be observ'd by a Reprover, is, to do it in as *private* a manner as possible.

By which I mean, The being so far from reproving an Offender in a publick manner, and before a Multitude of Hearers, that we should on the contrary rather

ther cover his Sins, and make it in abundance of Cases one great Part of our Business to conceal them from the Knowledge of the World. Because there is such a rivetted Modesty in Humane Nature, that the Fear and Sense of Shame proves a powerful Restraint from many wicked Actions. And therefore Advice given, and Reproofs apply'd, with a *Salvo* to Reputation and a secured Credit, proposes a *double* Advantage to gain a more easy Reception. Here is the Good of the Soul and the Clearness of the Character jointly promoted; one of the chiefest Blessings of this Life, and the true Interest of the next, carry'd on with a conspiring Force. And who can resist Impressions of this nature? A Check so private will be deep and lasting, as being the undoubted Testimony of cordial Love.

Besides, The Efficacy of this Method appears by the unhappy Effect of the Contrary. There is an old English Proverb, *Past Shame, past Grace*, which carries a great deal of moral Truth in it. For not to regard a good Name is *Wicked* as well as *Foolish*; one of the best Securities of a virtuous Soul, being by this means, fatally overlook'd and neglected.

When

When a Person's Wickedness is once publickly known, and the Discovery has expos'd him to the Contempt of the World, the Loss of his present Reputation renders him careless in his future Conduct. And when a Man is arriv'd to such a degree of Neglect, as not to care what any Body says of him, *Impudence* follows of course, and *Hardness of Heart* comes close after it, and the *Loose* is given to all manner of Impiety. He thinks whatever he commits, his Character cannot be worse, however not restor'd. And within what Bounds will such an one be confin'd? This is an unanswerable Argument for *secret Admonitions* and *close Corrections*, against divulging the Faults of others, and for reproving in as *private* a manner as is possible.

Fourthly, A Reprover, is to have no other End than a constant aim at the *Reformation* of the Offender, and yet not to be always *Chiding* neither.

As to the first Branch of this Direction, when all is said and done, any *other* proposed End will spoil the *whole* Success of the Rebuke. God will judge every Man's Action according to the Intention, which was the first Mover. And
Man

Man in this case does act by the same Measure, as far as the Intentions of others come to be discover'd by us.

No Expression can triumph with more Power, than those which include the true Interest of the Persons to whom they are address'd. Though Words may be so *Piercing* as to touch us to the quick ; yet mutual Kindness causes a regard to reciprocal Discourses, and nothing is taken ill from one whom we believe to be our sincere *Friend*. When we know a Person truly loves us, speaks constantly in order to our Happiness, upon occasion directs and serves us in temporal Affairs, but principally aims at the Good of our Souls, whatever is said we *closely* listen to, and the Sense of these things sweetens even the *Bitterness* of a Rebuke.

But if any Temporal Design, if any Shew of Authority, if any Air of Ill-nature, if any Appearance of Contempt, be perceiv'd to mix together with our reprobating Sentences, let the Errours be never so Apparent, let the Guilt be never so Heinous, let the Arguments be never so Strong, upon *these* Accounts all is lost and to no effect. Here a *fair* Opportunity

ty is afforded to the Wicked to oppose and prevent a well-meant Zeal, a Flame is immediately kindled, and *All shall pass* for *Hypocrisy, Pride, or Peevishness*.

And yet though we are constantly to aim at the *Good* of the Offender; yet we must not be always *chiding* him neither. Because *this* bears abundance of *Reproach* in the Front, and carries more of *Sover-ness* than Religion along with it. I am sure it will be very much unlike that Engaging Character, which the Royal Psalmist gives even of an Holy God, of whom he declares, *Ps. ciii. 9.* That he *will not always be chiding, neither keepeth he his Anger for ever.* And I verily think an honest good *Christian* may weaken the *Authority* of his Words, and lose the *Effect* of his Zeal, by *continual Chidings*. Repeated Expressions are Nauseous, and frequently rebound without making the least Impressions: Whilst Rebukes *seldom* used, but when used, apply'd with *Sharpness* and given home, sink *deep* into the Heart. The *former* is by custom at last esteem'd to be *only* the Temper, the Way of the Reprover, and thus their Words are disregarded and vanish as it were into Air. The *lat-ter* is looked upon to proceed from the *Force*

Force of Religion, and this makes them
to give the more earnest heed.

Fifthly and Lastly, A Reprover, is to pray to God for Direction and Success. For as God is the Fountain of Wisdom, and the Source of all Power; So 'tis He that must direct us how to walk in Wisdom towards them that are without, and 'tis He alone that can order the unruly Wills and Affections of sinful Men. Every Method we may pitch upon, all the Contrivances we may frame, will prove Weakness and Blindness, unless guided by a Beam of the Heavenly Light. We may advise, and we may reprove, we may correct and we may persuade, but all will be in vain, except the preventing, the assisting Grace of God at the same time works upon them to render our Endeavours the more effectual. Let then every good Christian apply to the Throne of God to prevent him in all such Designs with his most gracious Favour, and to further him with his continual Help, to put acceptable Words into his Mouth, and to open the Hearts of his Hearers, to mollifie Tempers, and create obedient Ears, that the Work of Reformation may go on and prosper. A Petition zealously offer'd with

with so pious an Intention, will certainly be receiv'd by him who heareth Prayers, and an additional Reward be given for asking, besides the Expectation of Success, through the Divine Assistance.

From the various Directions now offer'd, we may perceive for our Instruction, the Unadvisedness of hasty Reproofs.

In Matters of considerable moment, especially where there is apparent Danger of failing, (and both these may here be justly supposed) 'tis not only highly Becoming but absolutely Necessary to Examine and Deliberate, before we determine to Proceed. Time and Cau-
tion, Looking round and Stepping by Leisure, and taking every Circumstance into Consideration, have rais'd the Noblest Structures, and finish'd Affairs of the most important Consequence. Whilst ancient Histories and daily Experience, afford memorable Instances of the ill Success of Rashness in publick and private, in political, military, and moral Affairs, and how many most excellent Designs have been spoil'd and ruin'd
by

by the blind Precipitancy of a hasty Mind.

I am sure a *Christian* Reproof is a publick-spirited Duty, has the most admirable Ends in view, mightily tends to the Glory of God, closely pursues the Happiness of Man, and highly advances Religion in the World. But *Fore-thought* and *Contrivance* must belong and deeply admitted, before such *complicated* Blessings can be laid, convey'd, finish'd, and brought unto Perfection. If we be not very circumspect in the minutest Circumstance, we may easily mistake as to Time, Place, Person, and Manner. And Rashness is the Natural Parent of Mistakes and Errours. Let us be never so sincere in our Intentions, if we be not *Wise* as well as *Good*, we shall miss, if not of our *Reward* from God, yet of our *Success* amongst Men. The Success must fall vastly *short* of our Expectation, shou'd God vouchsafe to bless and reward our *well-meant*, but mistaken Zeal: And our Reward to be sure will not be so Glorious, as it wou'd have been, had our Endeavours been so carefully projected as to have proved effectual.

Oh

Oh then let us be well Advis'd and exceeding Careful, how we go about, how we perform so nice a Duty. For since so many Mistakes may be made; since such a *number* of Circumstances must be consider'd; since so much Good depends upon the avoiding of the Mistakes by a due Consideration of the Circumstances, we may easily think too little, but can never be too cautious; and therefore it best becomes us to be as considerate as we can.

S E C T. VI.

An Rebuking FREEDOM esteem'd before FLATTERY.

THE Possibility of a Resentment at first, at least from some, may indeed be suppos'd, let the Rebuke be never so seasonably us'd, never so cautiously applied. But there are good Grounds for the Certainty of a more favourable Opinion upon second Thoughts and due Consideration. There are very few Sinners, how provoked soever at the beginning, but, when they cool, and reflect, and consider the Ends and Mo-

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tives of Advice, will be ready to thank their kind Admonishers for the Warning they sounded, the Check they gave, and the Mischiefs they prevented. The intended Good they perceive, makes their Hearts overflow with Gratitude and Joy, and, when serious, I verily believe they are ready to express with abundance of pleasing Satisfaction the thankful Regard they have for their Persons upon the account of their Counsel.

Such an Opinion will the considerate Part of the World entertain of a Re-prover, *barely consider'd* as he is in himself. But if he be truly *compar'd* with his treacherous flattering Opposite, the Truth of the Esteem will be the more apparent. He shall certainly meet with Favour, and justly meet with more Favour, than an unworthy Flatterer. For whatever Judgment may be at present formed of the *one* or of the *other*, when the *Designs* of *both* are seen through and view'd together, unavoidable Alterations will be made in our Minds, and our Opinions changed. The *Flatterer* lieth in wait to *deceive*; the *Rebuker* speaketh the *Truth* from his Heart. The *Rebuker* only proposes the *Good* of his Neighbour by his Counsel; The *Flatte-*

ver wholly seeketh his own Interest, and is serving particular *By-Ends* for himself. This is *unstable* in all his Words and Ways; That is *constant* in his Aim, and immovable in his Principles. A good Blessing shall come upon the *One*; but the Curse of God shall fall upon the *Other*. The Designs of the *One* are so Base, Ungenerous, and Destructive, as no Man can approve; and the Designs of the *Other* are so Noble, Praise-worthy, and Beneficial as every Person will commend.

Amongst the *Humble* and *Discerning* a little time will be sufficient to trace out and discover Sincerity and Treachery, though Folly and Pride seem resolv'd to be blind. But shou'd vain concurring Causes for a while intercept our Sight and infatuate our Minds, the *unhappy Effects* of ill-designing Men (which possibly, nay probably, may not be long conceal'd) must surely open our Eyes, will certainly awaken us to clearer Thoughts. When those Misfortunes come to be our Portion, which we wou'd not believe, tho' kindly forewarn'd, and that Happiness and Security found to be lost, which was as fondly expected as it was deceitfully promised; such an *After-Experience* must set us free from mistaking of Persons,

and teach us to distinguish, know, and remember, whom to value, and who was our sincerest Friend. In this case, if not before, what different Sentiments will spring up in our Minds, what different Characters proceed from our Mouths, concerning him, who had the *Courage*, who had the *Kindness*, to tell us of our Faults, and with Perseverance to press the Amendment of them to prevent our Misery. The most audacious Sinners, when *poor* and *persecuted*, *afflicted* and *trapp'd* in the Works of their own Hands, will justly condemn such as sooth'd them in their Vices, and said, No Harm shall come unto you ; and they will readily call to mind *who* wou'd have stopp'd them in the Career of their Vices, and *how* happy they had been, had they been so wise as to have hearken'd to their Advice and observ'd their Counsel. And those wicked Men, whose rushing headlong into a dismal Precipice has been *prevented* by kind Admonitions and bold Rebukes, with dilated Hearts and willing Joy will praise their best and chiefest Benefactors, give them the Commendation of true sincere *Christians*, bless God for giving such Power unto Men and directing their Vertue to do them good, and pray unto him to reward them for

for the vigorous Exercise of this highest Charity.

The Passion may form ill Language, and an angry Word may sometimes drop, but when I perceive my daily, my Bosom-Companion runs the hazard of losing my Friendship, rather than not endeavour to keep me from sinning against God, and ruining my self; when strange Oppositions and monstrous Ingratitude only serve to sharpen his Zeal and double his Diligence, and he will not desist, till either *his Arguments* prevail, or *my Obstinacy* prove inexcusable, how can I forbear to love and honour, esteem and respect so true a Friend? Time and Seriousness always sets us right in our Apprehensions of things and Persons.

But shou'd we suppose a Rebuker to be defective in some *Points of Prudence* and *Address* (as a very good Man for want of a perfect Knowledge of the World, may be mistaken) the *Sincerity* of his well meant Zeal will, I am sure it shou'd, atone for circumstantial Imprudences and unavoidable Miscarriages. And I may be bold farther to say, a *sincere Roughness* is much more valuable than a *courtly Dissimulation*. If present,

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if future Happiness or Misery, be of any Moment, there is all the reason in the World to believe, that, upon Consideration, upon Experience, an honest Reprover, who has only the Honour of God, and the Good of his Brother in View, and speaketh the Truth from his Heart, though not in the most taking and genteel Manner, will be highly favour'd by God, by Angels, and by Men, in their Thoughts, in their Affections, in their Words, and in their Actions, in this and future Generations; whilst the flattering Tongue, which lieth in wait to betray, shall be condemned to everlasting Contempt.

From this favourable Acceptance of a wise and rebuking Freedom, we may infer this Observation, *The little Fear of disobliging in such a Case.* An Inference, not only fairly drawn, but very useful to be consider'd, as striking at the Root and Foundation of the chiefeſt Hindrance in the Duty of Reproving. For dangerous and mistaken Civility lies at the bottom of ſuch a Neglect; and Men, I believe, are not willing to Reprove, because they are unwilling to Offend.

Now

Now suppose Offence shou'd be the Consequence, we ought to obey God rather than Men, and answer our Obligations to him, whose Favour soever we may lose, whose Displeasure soever we may incurr, but we are in no Danger of such a Consequence, if we regard either Scripture, Reason, or Experience, and our Reproofs be temper'd as they ought. It may be esteem'd one happy Circumstance of Life to be plac'd near an open Enemy or a secret Friend. Because the one for Spite, and the other for Love, will be sure to tell us of our Faults. But which way soever we come to the Knowledge of our Errours, we may, if we please, make a right and good Use of the Information: And where there are no real nor apparent Grounds for a Reaprover to be thought an Enemy, he must go under the Character of a sincere Friend. A charming Character indeed, a Character which includes the Pursuit and Prosecution of the universal Happiness of him, whom we thus cordially and truly Love, and without such an End, without such Demonstrations, Love is only the Name of Love.

Let us not then *unkindly Cautious* stand upon the nice Punctilioes of Honour, let not the *unreasonable Fears* of disobliging stop our Advice, hinder our Zeal, damp our Courage, and prevent our Reproofs. Let us remove these Thoughts, chase away these Fears, and shew our selves Men, shew our selves *Christians*, and do valiantly for the City of our God, for the Success of our Religion. *For our Brethren and Companions Sake*, let us boldly rebuke Vice, and not only *wish* them *Prosperity*, but *seek to do them Good*. A constant and unwearied Zeal will surmount all Difficulties, and dispel those little Surmises, and Suspicions which might arise in Men's Hearts upon the first Oppositions made to their Vices. Seemingly harsh Advice and unrelishing Reproofs will be at the last confess'd to be only like the Physician's bitter Draught, the more *Sick* it makes us, the more *Good* it does us; or like the Cuttings and Launcings of a Surgeon, which let out the *corrupted* Matter of the Sore to make a speedier and more perfect Cure. By a steady Application all Objections will vanish away, and we recover our Reputation, and cause it to shed forth a bright-

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er Lustre. In this World, in the Next, at Present and Hereafter, they will praise our Pains, and applaud our Doings, heartily thank us for stepping in between them and Ruin, and bless the Time that ever they convers'd with our Persons, and heard such Words proceed out of our Mouths. And since this is, this will be the Truth of the Case, if any of us at *any time* heretofore through the Fear of Disobliging, have been prevail'd upon from giving Checks, Admonitions, and Counsels, to daring and presumptuous Offenders, to wandring and benighted Christians, I hope we shall *neuer more* be wrought upon by so weak an Argument, but have so much Regard to *Charity* and *Truth*, as to speak what we really think of one another, and speak the Truth from our Hearts.

SECT.

S E C T. VII.

*The Happiness of an obedient Ear to a kind
and wise REPROOF.*

THAT which I here intend is to per-
suade us all, to follow the Advice,
as well as value the Person of Him, who
is so kind as to correct us in case of Sin,
and direct us in case of Ignorance.
There are few so *Prophane*, as to oppose
apparent Truth; there are abundance so
Civil, as to give a Friendly Admonition
the Hearing; there are many so *Grateful*
as heartily to thank them for their Pains;
but all this availeth not any thing, all
this falleth short of the Glory of God,
and their own Felicity, so long as a wilful
Resolution not to observe the Directions
given, though acknowledg'd to be good,
continues in the Mind.

A Willingness to be inform'd and a
Readiness to obey, are the most necessary
Instruments to Virtue, without which
neither Knowledge nor Practice can be
obtain'd. This Disposition is first and
absolutely requir'd by all Professors in a
Search after Truth, whatever the Scien-
ces may be which we are resolv'd to
study.

study. And it is the most eminently, the most indispensably requir'd, when we apply our Minds to know what God requires of us to be done, to understand Moral and Divine Matters, where the Inclinations and Affections of corrupt Nature in the *Learner*, is apt to clap a pre-judge Byass upon the Judgment, against the Rules of the *Instructor*. I am sure a Desire of Conviction, by the means of Information, is a Temper highly becoming *Christians*, with which our Saviour expects his Disciples to be adorned; without which his Doctrine wou'd not be receiv'd in the World. When the Heart complies with the Ear and Understanding, and when we are willing to obey the Discoveries of Truth, the Intention of our Saviour's Parable concerning the Seed sown in the good Ground is spiritually fulfill'd. For as in order to a plentiful Crop, Regard is to be had to the *Nature* of the *Soil*, as well as the *Goodness* of the *Seed*: So in Improvements of a Spiritual Nature, not only *sound Doctrine*, but a *happy Disposition*, is requir'd. This happy Disposition is the *honest and good Heart* spoken of by Christ, where the Word of God is sown, receiv'd, manur'd, and bringeth forth plentifully,

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some Thirty, some Sixty, and some a Hundred Folds.

Oh then out of Obedience to Christ, out of Gratitude to our Friends, out of Love to our selves, let us endeavour to attain this happy Temper, and be willing to be led by the Hand and guided by the Eye, that brings us to our Duty. To the Words of our Reprovers let us attentively listen: And if they erroneously correct, it truly becomes us to convince them of their Errors, and set them free from their Mistakes; but, if they tell us the Truth, let us heartily embrace, follow, and observe it. Advice well given and well receiv'd is commended and recommended by the Wise Man, when he gives this excellent Comparison of it Prov. xxv, 12. *As an Ear-ring of Gold and an Ornament of fine Gold; so is a wise Reprover upon an obedient Ear.*

Besides, God has made none of his Creatures so far Perfect, as to be independent one upon another. As the Necessities of the Wise are appointed to be supply'd by the Labours of the Ignorant; so the Understandings of the Ignorant

Ignorant are to be enlighten'd by the Knowledge of the *Wise*. So that by this willing obedient Temper the World is dispos'd for mutual Assistance, and Humane Reason answers the Purposes of God; differing Perfections are happily levell'd for an universal Benefit, and Variety of Knowledge is made truly useful. Then we argue aright, and discourse for some good End, and the Design of Society is answer'd, and the Advantage of Conversation advanc'd.

Nay farther, such a Temper is exceedingly happy, as being attended with many other singular Advantages. By this Temper we discover within us a Perfection excellent in it self: Because it shews how little we are byaf's'd by private Inclination and Prejudice, and how our Reason is much superiour to the Dominion of Passion. By this Temper we take the most effectual Way to improve our Minds still to a higher Perfection: Because, being inclin'd to embrace Truth wherever we find it, many will be the Instructors of those, who are so desirous to learn and willing to be inform'd. By this Temper we shall particularly arrive to a truer Knowledge of our selves, of our own Life and Actions: Because every

every one will be ready to undeceive us by speaking the Truth, when they see their Words are neither taken ill nor spent in vain. By this Temper we consult for an easy Passage through this World: Because Peace and Quietness is the Natural Effect of it, and we can scarce imagine, how many Blessings of Humane Life are likely to be secur'd by it, and how many disgiuftful Inconveniences prevented. *Lastly,* This Temper is exceedingly happy from the Spiritual and Eternal Consequences of the same. For by this we fulfil the Commands of God, promote the Vertues of his Creatures, propagate Divine Knowledge in the World, better the Soul of Man, put a stop to the Progress of Sin, are made Wise unto Salvation, and obtain *Heaven* as our sure Reward. The Expectation of Favour with God as well as Reputation amongst Men, of comfortable Enjoyments here, as well as everlasting Glories hereafter, should prevail with us to comply with the Advice and Reproof of Friends, and do call upon us in the Words of our Saviour, *He, that hath Ears to hear, let him hear.*

S E C T. VIII.

A wilful Contempt of ADVICE and REPROOF describ'd.

There are two Parts which constitute the Nature of this Crime. The first implies, A Resolution either not to mind what our Advisers say, or not to be convinc'd by any Arguments they shall offer in order to our Good. The second supposes, An open Contempt and outward Defiance of all Advice and Reproof.

First, The Nature of this Crime implies, A Resolution, either not to mind what our Advisers say, or not to be convinc'd by any Arguments they shall offer in order to our Good. A Resolution that is strange and unreasonable indeed, but 'tis such a one, as many Offenders are guilty of maintaining and espousing. A Resolution so circumstantiated at first sight appears to be attended with prodigious Aggravations to enhance the Crime. The most obstinate, I believe, will in any Case but their own be ready to condemn it, as being contrary to Reason, contrary to Religion, contrary to Gratitude, Peace, and Happiness.

But

But shou'd we suppose this kind of Sinners, with a seeming Appearance at least, to be so civil as to give a Friendly Admonition the Hearing : Yet, if God knows they are *beforehand* resolv'd, neither to alter the Opinions, nor change their Manners, whatever Arguments may be proposed for the one, and whatever Directions may be afforded by the other ; Or, if the World sees they retain their Notions and follow the same Course of Life they liv'd before ; in either of these Cases the Nature of this Crime is in every Degree equally injurious to themselves, though in the Front it does not carry so much Rudeness to others.

In this Supposition they have only alter'd giving a little Offence to the World. Whereas of the two it had been much better to have shewn a kind of Resentment at the Beginning of a Reproof, and afterwards upon cooler Thoughts to have observ'd and follow'd the Directions they then receiv'd, than to have an outward Attention join'd with an inward Resolution against Conviction and Regard. The former Offence is only a Breach of Good Breeding : The latter an Affront to Truth. In the one Case real Passion

Passion is discover'd in our Natures: But in the other Case we prove our selves to be Hypocritical and Insincere.

The whole Principle put together amounts to thus much, that the Offender here describ'd and threaten'd, either refuses to hear when he is call'd upon to attend, or in his Thoughts disregards the Advice and the Reproof, even when he seemeth to attend to what is spoken, even when he is persuaded and intreated, courted and bribed to a Change of his Mind and Life.

Secondly, The other Part, which constitutes the Nature of this Crime, consists in, An open Contempt and outward Defiance of all Advice and Reproof. And the Wiseman makes use of such Expressions as do aptly describe the disdainful Air of such a kind of Scorer, *Te have set at naught all my Counsel, and wou'd none of my Reproof.*

And without doubt it can be no small Crime, where such black, such aggravating Circumstances attend the Action. Contempt upon any Account is found to be a Burthen grievous, a Load insupportable. But to be despis'd for an intended

Good, to have wholesome Admonitions, oppos'd by Scoffs and Railings, by that Person too whose Happiness was to be promoted by them, carries a considerable Mixture of Ingratitude and Guilt, and must be Censur'd and Condemn'd both by God and Man.

We read of such a Kind of Offenders in our Saviour's Days, and by the ill Success he met with, we may conclude what we have Reason to expect. No one can undertake so happy a Work with that moving and affectionate Eloquence, with those Demonstrations of Mercy and Wisdom, of the Spirit and Power, as he did. And yet he gives this melancholy Account of his Mission and Progress, Mat. xiii. 15. *The Hearts of this People are waxed gross, and their Ears are dull of Hearing, and their Eyes they have closed, lest they shou'd see with their Eyes, and hear with their Ears, and understand with their Hearts and be converted, and I shou'd heal them.* To the Jews he Preach'd, among the Jews he Convers'd, they saw his Miracles, and examin'd his Life, and heard his Doctrine; and by all rational Ways he endeavour'd to bring them to Repentance and an Acknowledgment of the Truth. But that Perverseness of Temper,

per, which they wilfully indulg'd, and that inexcusable Obstinacy they resolv'd to maintain, rejected the Kindest, the Closest, the most Divine Offers of Salvation, even though they own'd at the same time, and made this Confession, that no Man ever did such Works as he did; and that never *Man speak like this Man.* When he commands, the Heavens and the Earth, the Air, and the Seas, do listen and obey; at his Word the stormy Wind ariseth, and when he speaks again, on a sudden there is a Calm: But let him call upon a few frequently and pressingly, and he refuses to hear, and will remain to the last Incredulous.

This Example of the Perverseness of the Jewish Nation, and how *this Temper* obstructed the Light of the Truth, and the Means of Conviction, I have mention'd, not so much to inform us, that this was their Sin, which was so inexcusably condemn'd By Christ, and for which they afterwards were punish'd with Spiritual Obduracy and Temporal Calamities, as to let us know, that this wilful Temper will be equally inexcusable in us, and render ineffectual the kindest Advice and best Counsel

that can be afforded. For with respect to Obstinacy, *our* Case and the Case of the Jews is much the same. We have all the Means and Opportunities that are sufficient for Salvation, and *they* cou'd enjoy no more. If the Means *they* had were attended with some extraordinary Circumstances above those of *ours*, it must be consider'd, that *we* do not labour under those Prejudices and Prepossessions which *they* did, and *we* moreover have the Happiness of some Arguments for the Truth of the Gospel, which *they* in our Saviour's Time cou'd not possibly have. And if *His* Arguments were used in vain upon the account of their provoking Obstinacy, all *our* Reasonings will prove as ineffectual, where we meet with the like Occasions.

And I fear the World is not now so well amended, as to exclude all Remains of this sort of Guilt. There are none so *Blind* as those that will not See, nor none so *Deaf* as those who will not Hear. And what Way can any Man possibly take to enlighten the one, and move the other. If Persons be never so wicked, yet if they have but this one good Property left, of being patient under Rebukes and giving an Ear to Instruction, we may hope there

there will come a Time when our Words will be remembred and regarded, and we behold a welcome Reformation. But for the Case of wilful Obsturacy God himself has no where provided a Remedy. For if the Will and Mind of Man will not concur with the inward and outward Means of Instruction and Reformation, God will not force us to be Good, neither must we expect to be made Wise by Inspiration.

Let us but consider the various Returns of Variety of Sinners, and this will presently appear. How many are there, who with *Proud Wrath* fly in the Face of their Reprovers? How many others, who with a *Supercilious Neglect* trample under foot the Counsel of the Aged, the Advice of Friends? How many others again, who *Scornfully* turn their Backs, when they are invited to turn from their evil Ways? Does not God call upon them, saying, *Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?* And do we not see they still go forward in the Paths of Iniquity? Does not Man lift up his Voice and cry aloud, *How long, ye simple ones, will ye love Simplicity, turn ye at my Reproof?* And do they at all leave the Way to Ruin and Destruction? Are

not these unhappy Observations true? And does not the experimental Survey of a sinful Age prove them with a Witness?

Indeed I leave it to others to judge for themselves, how far their own *smother'd* Thoughts are concern'd in *Approaches* to this Guilt, even when they have not broken forth into rude Expressions and open Contempt.. Only I cannot but remind them of this Truth, as preparatory to a right Judgment in the Case, That the *Scornful* in *Heart* is an Abomination unto the Lord. And if we inwardly hate Reproof, and entertain an ill Opinion of our Advisers, and despise them in our *Thoughts*, we effectually set at naught all their Counsel, and reject their Designs, though some Temporal Reasons shou'd confine the Reluctance within the Limits of our own Breasts.

S E C T.

S E C T. IX.

The Temporal Evils of a Contemptuous Obstinacy consider'd.

There is a common Proverb amongst us, that *wilful People seldom want Woe*. And if we consider, what are the valuable Blessings of Humane Life, and observe, how Wilfulness undermines those Blessings, and join Experience as a Means for the Proof of both, we shall find it verified.

Is not an excellent Reputation a commendable and valuable Blessing? And yet what worse Character can be given of a Person than that of Wilfulness? It implies Shortness of Sight, Meanness of Parts, Rudeness of Temper, and Extreme Folly; and withal an Irreclaimable Disposition of Heart, and Resolution not to be made Wiser. In other single Vices, though perhaps very notorious, there may be an expected Amendment: But *this excludes all Hopes of future Reformation.*

A Competency of Estate is unquestionably one great part of Worldly Felicity.

And yet what the Wiseman speaks of the Wrecks and Security of publick Bodies, is equally true of the private Affairs of Families in this Respect, Prov. xi. 14. *Where no Counsel is, the People fall, but in the Multitude of Counsellours there is Safety.* Rashness and Folly, rejecting Advice out of Self-Conceit and Perverse-ness, have brought many Families and Persons to Decay, and fallen into those Inconveniences, which mature Delibe-ration aided by prudent Counsels, might have happily prevented ; and the best that can be said of such is, That this is their *Folly*, and their *Posterity* will curse their Doings.

Who is there that doubts whether a sound Constitution be a valuable Blef-sing ? And yet how unjust are such Peo-ple in a negligent Care of their Bodies ? Either they will not be persuaded to take or follow any Prescriptions for the *Resto-ring* and *Continuing* their Health ; or they will run upon such Courses as are found very *Prejudicial* to it.

Peace and Quietness are pleasing Com-forts in themselves, and afford a Re-lish to all other Enjoyments. And yet what violent Passions, what grating Ex-pressions,

pressions, what warm Contentions, what unhappy Quarrels, what long Disgusts, do we hear and behold to arise in Conversation with Families, amongst Friends, by perverse Disputings, by unreasonable Contradictions of Men of corrupt Minds, of Men of wilful Oppositions to plain and evident Proposals for their Good. 'Tis hard to think such Persons are not uneasy *Themselves*: But I am sure they are very unpeaceable and disturbing to *Others*.

These are the *natural Fruits* of this Vice, which none can either vindicate or deny. But did not such woful Misfortunes directly spring from it, little less might be expected from the *just Judgments* of God in the Dispensations of his Providence.

From the recorded Instances of Calamitous Punishments upon the Jews in the Prophets Days, and after our Saviour's Time, for obstinate Blindness of Mind and Hardness of Heart, we may infer, The Greatness of God's *Displeasure* upon this provoking Sin, and what abundance of Reason there is for private Persons, who stand Guilty of this Offence, to dread the terrible Vengeance of an Almighty Being. How can we forbear

bear taking notice of Occurrences so remarkable and useful? The Captive Daughter of Zion calleth upon others to observe her mournful State, in the Language of the Lamenting Prophet, Lam. i. 12. *Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold and see, if there be any Sorrow like unto my Sorrow which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the Day of his fierce Anger:* And will we not endeavour to avoid an obdurate Temper, lest we also fall into so dismal a State? We know the provoking, the inexcusable Sin which the Jews were guilty of against the Prophets of God, against the Son of God; and we read with what Severity they were punish'd for it in the Sight of Man. And will we not be instructed, will we not learn to hear and fear by such Examples as were written for our Admonition, for a Warning to us? They wilfully shut their Eyes against the clearest Light, stopp'd their Ears against the most healing Doctrines, and this was the Truth of their Accusation and the Cause of Heaven's Displeasure; and, if We in this our Day obstinately oppose Advice, refuse Instruction, reject the Counsel of the Aged, and passionately disregard the kind Directions of Friends, and those whom God hath set

set over us in the Lord, what reason have we to think our Condition will be more secure than theirs? What reason is there for us to imagine God will be better pleased with us than he was with them? God's Nature is always the same to Day, Yesterday, and for Ever; Sin will be the perpetual Object of his Anger; and Wilfulness is represented in Scripture to be the Height of his Abomination. And let us not flatter our selves into vain Presumptions, lest his Goodness incens'd by our obstinate Ingratitude at last be forced to triumph in our Ruin.

As Wilfulness leadeth to innumerable Temporal Evils, both in its Natural Tendency and from the Just Dispensations of Providence: So, whenever such a Person falls into Calamity, there is this unhappy Circumstance attending him, that he falls Unpitied. To stand in need of Pity is a considerable Misfortune, but to need it and not to meet with it doubles the Vexation, and to know our selves to be the only Cause of being thus forsaken by God and Man doubles it again.

God has declar'd he will take this Method with such Despisers, such proud Opposers of his Truth. He will be unconcern'd

concern'd what becomes of them, no ways regard the Miseries they suffer. When Distress and Anguish is upon them and they brought to feel what they wou'd not dread and avoid, He will laugh at their Calamity, he will mock when their Fear cometh, mock when they are at their Wit's End, and their Fear cometh as Desolation, and their Destruction as a Whirlwind, Prov. i. 26, 27. with certain and violent Ruin. Nay, the following Words carry the Point still higher, and prove, that the Degree of Obstinacy may be such, as to render Prayers useless and Heaven no Sanctuary for the Oppressed; *Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer, they shall seek me early but they shall not find me.*

And if Pity and Assistance must not be expected from God, no better Treatment, to be sure, will be found from Man. When such a Person complains of the Unhappiness of his Condition, he meets with a just Reply in the Words of Jeremiah, Lam. iii. 39. *Wherfore doth a living Man complain, a Man for the Punishment of his Sin?* What can he say, what can he answer for himself, what Arguments must he use to move the World to Condoleance and Compassion? Let him

him cry, Woe is me; he is answer'd, You brought it upon your self. If he says, What must I do; it is return'd, E'en go on to suffer what you wou'd not be persuaded to avoid. To a Man labouring under *unavoidable* Misfortunes, Compassion will be quickly shewn; when he is brought into *unforeseen* Difficulties and Straits which cou'd not be prevented, how ready is the World to *commiserate* his State and *assist* him in his Troubles: Here is some Foundation in Reason for such Expectations. But as for those who are told of their Sin, who are beforehand aware of the Danger, and yet run upon it after such a Sense, and such a Warning, every one may take up and apply with abundance of Justice and Truth those Words of Job, Job. xvi. 4. *I cou'd heap up Words against you, and shake my Head at you.*

Nay, our *Conscience* will arise in such a Case to condemn us. And that surely must be a very wretched State, when we shall condemn our selves, and God and Man shall condemn us too. Wilfulness we see directly leads to inevitable Calamities, and in these Calamities *God* has threaten'd to forsake

sake us, Man will have no Compassion for us, our own Thoughts will be bitter to us, and what, O! what will we do in the End thereof!

S E C T. X.

The Spiritual Evils of an Obstinate Temperament, to be examined.

I shall here observe, the Nature of Spiritual Blessings, and that a Christian by wilful Obstinacy may sin so far as to be deprived of them; the Justice of God in doing this upon so great a Provocation; and the deplorable Misery of that Sinner's Condition, who hath arrived to Blindness and Hardness of Heart.

First, The Nature of Spiritual Blessings, and that a Christian by wilful Obstinacy may sin so far as to be deprived of them.

Knowledge and Grace are the two Wings of the Soul, which keep it soaring towards Heaven. The One is necessary to inform the Mind, the Other is necessary to influence the Heart, and Both do help to conduct our Spirit through all the Mazes and Labyrinths of Error; through

through all the Wiles and Temptations of Sin, to a State of clear Truth and perfect Purity. When we fully perceive, what God requires of us in our particular Stations, and have Strength and Power to overcome the Difficulties attending it, it may be esteem'd an invaluable Felicity, and we rest satisfy'd we are already quicken'd to a Divine and Spiritual Life.

But then this Knowledge may be darken'd, this Power may be impair'd, nay, it may be moreover lost: Lost by God's leaving us to our selves, by his withdrawing his Grace, and by his sending and inflicting infatuating Judgments; Which he does sometimes for a time, as was apparent in the Case of Nebuchadnezzar when he took away his Reason and restor'd it to him again; and sometimes by delivering the Offenders up to final Impenitence for ever, as was evident in that remarkable Passage of God's hardening the Heart of Pharaoh.

Every one in the World I am fully satisfy'd, hath a Day of Grace afforded him, and is Partaker of the Means and Opportunities of Salvation. But though God's Mercy is sufficiently proved to be over

over all his Works ; yet 'tis as plainly reveal'd and may be as reasonably inferr'd, that his Spirit will not always strive with Man, that Men may *out-live*, may *out-sin* the Day of his Patience and Forbearance. And nothing can or will sooner provoke God to bring a People to this unhappy State, than a continued wilful Obstinacy against all possible Engagements of being made wiser and better.

The just Apprehensions of this Danger of being deprived of Spiritual Succours we may perceive, by observing, what God in general has threaten'd to, and already inflicted upon such incorrigible Sinners. *Psf. lxxxi. 12. 13.* My People wou'd not hear my Voice and Israel wou'd not obey me, so I gave them up unto their own Hearts Lusts and let them follow their own Imaginations. *Isa. xxix. 10.* The Lord hath poured out upon you the Spirit of deep Sleep and hath closed your Eyes ; and v. 14. Behold I will proceed to do a marvellous Work amongst this People, even a Marvellous Work and a Wonder, for the Wisdom of their Wisemen shall perish, and the Understanding of their prudent Men shall be hid. There is a very eminent Passage to this purpose, in *Rom. i.* Where, because that when they knew God, they glorify'd him not as God, God

God gave them up to Uncleanness, v. 24.
God gave them up unto vile Affections, v.
26. God gave them over to a reprobate
Mind; v. 28. The same Apostle writing
to the Thessalonians declares himself thus,
ii Thess. ii. 10, 11, 12. For this cause,
even because they receiv'd not the Love of the
Truth, that they might be saved, God shall
send them strong Delusions, that they shou'd
believe a Lie, that they all might be damned
who believe not the Truth, but had Pleasure
in Unrighteousness.

Our Saviour with a moving Compassion and Flouds of Tears, bewails the Condition of the People of Jerusalem, Luke xix. 41, 42. and wept over the City, because they had not known in that their Day the things that belonged unto their Peace, and because they were now hid from their Eyes. The Blasphemy of some of them was of that nature, as made him openly and avowedly declare, Matt. xiii. 32. That it shou'd not be forgiven neither in this World, neither in the World to come. And indeed whilst we reflect, what kind Offers of Salvation were the first made to them, and how ungratefully they were rejected; whilst we reflect on the amazing Derision and Stupidity they discover'd at the Cross of Christ, after his Resurrection,

Resurrection, and upon the Descent of the *Holy Ghost*, when at the same time the *Sun* was darken'd, and *Nature* trembled, and the *Rocks* split, and the *Temple* rent, and the *Graves* were open'd, and the *Dead* arose; when at the same time the *Centurion* and *Guards* smote upon their *Breasts*, and *People* from every *Country* under *Heaven*, stood *Wondring* at what they *Saw* and *Heard*; to what can we ascribe their *Derision* and *Stupidity* amidst such powerful, rowsing, and convincing Arguments, but to God's withdrawing his *Spirit* and giving them up to a fatal *Obduration*. God, no doubt, for their manifold Provocations, and open *Contempt*, and opposing those that were sent unto them, *cast upon* many of them the *Spirit* of *Slumber*, that seeing they might see and not perceive, and hearing they might hear and not understand.

From these remarkable Expressions, these uncontested Examples, so plainly deliver'd in *Holy Writ*, there cannot be a fairer nor clearer Observation made than, *The visible Danger of infatuating hardening Judgements* from God upon a Sinner, who will go on in his *Wickedness*, *maugre* all *Advice*, *Counsel*, *Instruction*, and *Reproof*, in spite of the inward and outward

ward Means of Conviction, the loud and repeated Calls both of Heaven and Earth. And this *Doctrine* of the Final and Fatal Obduracy of an incorrigible Sinner, putting a full Period to his Day of Grace, and sealing up his everlasting Doom, is not only *clear*, but *useful*, as being apt to excite us to break off our Sins by Repentance, to stop us from going on to that high Degree of Obstinacy, to make us extremely cautious for the future, and possess our Hearts with a Holy Fear and a Watchful Care.

'Tis true, we cannot tell, how long a Christian may proceed in a Course of Iniquity before he falls under this heavy Punishment; and we must not be so bold and daring, as rashly and ignorantly to pronounce this Sentence either upon our selves or others. 'Tis out of the Compass of our Knowledge in particular Cases to set Bounds to the Patience and Mercy of God; and the promoting Despair is the worst Use we can make of this Doctrine, which the Scriptures deliver and I have asserted. On the contrary; The Sense of a reprobate Mind, of a seared Conscience, of a harden'd Heart, of a final Impenitence, of the slavish Dominion of ungovernable Passions, shou'd strike up

on our Apprehensions, and awaken our Consideration to sin no more, lest this thing, worse than all temporal Calamities, come unto us. And now I shall go on to observe,

Secondly, The Justice of God in doing this upon so great a Provocation.

The Conference betwixt God and his People concerning his Church, which he compares to a well-fenced and well-planted Vineyard on a fruitful Hill, in Isa. v. 3, 4, &c. affords a Justification of himself in such a Concern. And now, O Inhabitants of Jerusalem and Men of Judah, judge I pray you, betwixt me and my Vineyard. What cou'd have been done more to my Vineyard, that I have not done in it? Wherefore when I looked, that it should bring forth Grapes, brought it forth wild Grapes? And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my Vineyard; I will take away the Hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the Wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down; and I will lay it waste, it shall not be pruned nor digged, but there shall come up Briars and Thorns: I will also command the Clouds that it shall rain no Rain upon it. For the Vineyard of the Lord of Hosts is the House of Israel, and the Men of Judah his pleasant Plant: And He looked for Judgment, but behold

behold Oppression ; for Righteousness, but behold a Cry. Nay, when this Argument is re-assumed in the Gospel, Luke xiii. 7. And God came to pronounce this Sentence, *Cut it down, why cumbereth it the Ground ?* The Dresser of the Vineyard, in his interceding Appeal, does not find fault with the pronounced Sentence, but only begs one more Opportunity of Tryal before the Executior, and if that be found in vain, then to use the utmost Severity, vers. 8. 9. *Lord let it alone this Year also, till I shall dig about it and dung it ; and if it bear Fruit, well : If not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.*

And indeed Reason it self leans to this Side of the Question. For what wou'd the World have God to do, when all Means to reclaim a Sinner fail ? What, but to forbear the Exercise of that Mercy which has been so scornfully rejected ; what, but to withdraw the Influences of that Holy Spirit which has been so frequently resisted and quenched. When the Opportunities of Salvation have been afforded, and the Offers of Grace sufficiently made ; when Time has been given for the Work of Repentance, and Exhortations repeated to close with the Duty ; when we wilfully let slip and

proudly despise such Kindnesses, and knowingly and obstinately persist after frequent Warnings in a wicked Course of Living ; then certainly it is just in God to deliver us up to *Satan*, whose devoted Vassals we are resolv'd to be, then it is certainly just in God to send us Blindness of Mind and Hardness of Heart, to punish Neglect with Stupidity, and Contempt with Obduracy.

Nay farther, there is nothing more harsh in all this, than in God's taking away any Sinner out of the World, before he has repented of his Sins, and made his Peace with *Heaven*, and sufficiently prepar'd himself for another State. And if none quarrels with God in this latter Case, there can be no reason to find fault with him in the former. For with respect to such a Sinner, 'tis all one, whether he be sent immediately to Hell, or continued longer alive under that irreversible Doom. If there be any Difference, 'tis rather on the Side of Mercy. Because the Punishment so long as he continues here, whatever it be, will be more easy than that of the other State, and his Example will be much more useful to others ; which is the End Divine Providence unquestionably aims at, by keeping

keeping him alive in a harden'd, impenitent, and punish'd State.

If this Consideration was thoroughly imbib'd and deeply weigh'd, it wou'd serve to explain the remarkable Case of Pharaoh, which I fear is notoriously and generally mistaken. For the World is apt to think, God first harden'd the Heart of Pharaoh, and then sent those Ten sore Plagues for his Hardness of Heart: Whereas his Hardness of Heart and the many Judgments which were inflicted upon him, were only so many various and distinct Punishments for his former Sins, and the Sins of his Ancestors, in cruelly oppressing the chosen People of God. Pharaoh and the Kings before him had heinously sinn'd against God and his People, before Moses was sent to desire their Deliverance; and God might justly have consign'd him over to everlasting Torments in a Moment, without suffering him to live in a harden'd, impenitent, and punish'd State. But He, in his Wisdom, designing to make him a publick Example to the World of incorrigible Obstinacy, harden'd his Heart before he died, plagu'd him and his People in this World, not only as a Fore-taste of what God had resolv'd they shou'd eternally suffer, but

as a *Warning* to the Inhabitants of the *Earth*, letting them see the Tremendous Power of God, and setting before their Eyes the *Fury of out-worn Patience*. For the Reason of God's hardening *Pharaoh's Heart*, and sending his Judgments upon that Prince, is deliver'd *Exodus ix. 16.* *In very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to shew in thee my Power; and that my Name may be declared throughout all the Earth.* Or, as the Apostle expresses it, *Rom. ix. 22.* *What, if God, willing to shew his Wrath and make his Power known, endur'd with much long-suffering the Vessels of Wrath fitted for Destruction.* God does not love to take advantage of his Creatures, he has declar'd his Unwillingness that any shou'd perish; but when nothing will prevail with Rebel-Man, he may leave him to follow his own Devices; he may and will triumph in his Ruin, and that in such a manner as he shall judge the most conducive to his own Glory. And now I go on to observe,

Thirdly, The deplorable Misery of that Sinner's Condition, who hath arriv'd to Blindness and Hardness of Heart. And this is discover'd by what he suffers at present, and by what he fears for the future,

The

The present Sufferings, which such a One labours under, are, The Slavery of his own Passions, and, The with-drawn Influences of the Spirit of God.

Man, left under the *Slavish Dominion* of his own Passions, is a very vain and profligate Creature, made an easy Prey to every wild Desire and Temptation. Thus let loose to Appetite and Lust, to obey Sin in its Inclinations and Suggestions, without Thought or Control, his Condition must needs be unhappy, impotent, forlorn, and lost; lost to all Thoughts of returning to God and Goodness. Trace him through all his Powers and Faculties, and we shall find his *Understanding debased*, his *Affections sensualliz'd*, his *Passions inflam'd*, his *Mind seared*, and his *Conscience harden'd*. Observe him in his Actions, and we shall perceive such amazing Instances of *Infatuation*, that we can't but strike in with that Observation of old, *Quos perdere vult Jupiter dementat prius*. That is, *Sin first Infatuates and then Destroys*. See how he stumbles and falls, how he gropes about and walks in Darkness and Blindness. Look sometimes how he runs upon Rocks and Precipices, *insensible of Danger*,

ger, and anon, how he stands trembling with unaccountable Fears and Terrors. Observe the Mazes and Labyrinths he is intangled with, the Confusion and Rashness, the Folly and Despair with which he is driven to and fro. Thus miserable is the Condition of that Man, who leaves a Life of Goodness and Wisdom, for one of Sensuality, Madness, and Mischief.

This is the State of such a Sinner, as he is in himself; but his Misery is increas'd, as being under the withdrawn Influences of the Holy Spirit, and so out of Hopes of becoming better. A deserted Soul, a Soul depriv'd of Heavenly Light and Divine Love, a Soul neither perceiving Spiritual things nor being affected with them, is a distressed State for surpassing all Temporal Calamities, even Temporal Death. The Sense and Fear of a Punishment so afflicting above all that can possibly befall us in this World, made King David in the midst of his Sins and the Exercise of his severe and bitter Repentance, so earnestly to pray, Psa. l. 10. 11, 12. *Make me a clean Heart, O God, and renew a right Spirit within me; Cast me not away from thy Presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me; O give me the Comfort*

*Comfort of thy Help again; And establish me
with thy free Spirit, nor let me go out of
thy Presence till this night till life shall
not be left me.*

In short, *Blindness* of Mind renders a Sinner insensible of what he does and what he runs upon; *Hardness* of Heart does so confirm him in ill Habits, that nothing shall divert him from his wicked Purposes, and the *taking away* God's Holy Spirit keeps him fast bound in a dead and benumm'd State. And what is there on this side of Hell that can bear any Proportion to the wretched Condition of such a Sinner.

It is indeed capable of an additional Misery, from what they may fear for the future, and to which this harden'd State of theirs is a fatal Prelude. This I shall just offer to your Meditation and so conclude this Essay.

If we have not obey'd the Voice of the Lord, but us'd him, his Laws, his Ministers, his Counsellours, with a contemptuous Neglect, he will declare to us at the Last Day, *Depart from me all ye that work Iniquity.* Now we may be deaf to his Calls, but he will one Day meet with us, and will be heard whether we will or no; and those, who wou'd have turned

turned us to Righteousness, will appear to our Condemnation, and their Words rise up in Judgment against us. Then will God laugh at our Calamity, and mock now our Fear is come; then will we say to the Mountains fall on us, and to the Hills cover us, from the Face of him that sitteth on the Throne and the Wrath of the Lamb. But all in vain; for we must appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ, and look on him whom we have pierced and despised; and be struck dumb at the pronounced Sentence of, Go ye Cursed into everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels; This is the State ye justly deserve, this is the State ye wou'd not be persuaded to avoid, take and inherit your own Choice, and receive the Wages of your Sin and Folly.

O miserable End of Wilfulness and Contempt! Miserable to all Eternity, in which as there is no Alleviation, so from which there can be no possible Reprieve. The Rich Man's Prayer in Hell to Abraham in Heaven, is answer'd with an express Intimation of this nature, where he does not only meet with a just, insulting Remembrance of his Behaviour and Manner of Life in this World, but is plainly told, Between us and you there is a great Gulf fixed;

fixed; so that they, which wou'd pass from hence to you, cannot; neither can they pass to us that wou'd come from thence. What before was only threaten'd, will then come to be actually and literally Fulfill'd. Then shall they call upon me, faith the Lord, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but shall not find me: For that they hated Knowledge and did not chuse the Fear of the Lord. They wou'd none of my Counsel, they despised all my Reprof. Therefore shall they eat the Fruit of their own Way, and be fill'd with their own Devices.

What shall I farther urge but to beg of you, O Christian Reader, to consider what I have said, and the Lord give you Understanding in all things. Suffer me to exhort you in the Name, in the Bowels, in the Words, of Jesus, and to persuade you to sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto you, lest a contemptuous Obstinacy in a wicked Course of Life bring you to Hardnes of Heart, and final Impenitence conduct thee to Eternal Damnation. Be engaged constantly and fervently to Pray, From Blindness and Hardnes of Heart, and Contempt of thy Word and Commandment, Good Lord deliver me; Lie prostrate and heartily say, Amen. Good Lord deliver me.

ESSAY

ESSAY II.

DRUNKENNESS.

SECT. I.

The Nature of DRUNKENNESS in its several Species describ'd.

HE must be a mere Novice in the World, and little acquainted with the Corruptions of Humane Nature, whose Observation has not taught him, that the Commonness of Vice frequently abates the Heinousness of Guilt in the Opinions of Men. *Modesty* and *Reason* are the noble Ornaments of Mankind, and natural Restraints to the Exorbitancy of our Actions. But *Custom* and *Company* strangely weakens their conducting Power, whilst the former basely degenerates into *Impudence*, and the latter tamely submits to *Passion*. And our Understandings being thus debauch'd and our Affections

fections deprav'd, we lose that lively Sense of *Evil*, both in its *Nature* and *Consequences*, which is so necessary to the Security of our *Vertue* and a *Christian life*.

It is possible for a Man, if not perfectly to *lose*, yet in a great Measure to *stifle* the natural Distinctions of *Good* and *Evil*. And nothing will effect this sooner than bad Customs and evil Society. And unfortunate Modesty has occasion'd a Compliance with a general Practice. And *Custom*, the *Plague* of wise Men, and *Idol* of Fools, has impos'd upon the Mind to entertain favourable Opinions of Vice.

But Sin is not the less heinous, because loose Men think otherwise and take contrary Courses. For such an Action will be *Sinful*, and such an Action will be *Necessary*, whether they think so or no. Because *Right* and *Wrong* is not to be gather'd from the *Notes* of Men, or the *Customs* of the World, but from the *Law* of Reason and the *Word* of God. And it is not the perverse Fancy of Man, nor the constituted Laws of a Nation, which will make *Drunkenness* a *Vertue*, or *Temperance* a *Vice*,

Vice, Oppression a Duty, or Justice a Sin.

Now amongst all those Sins, which are at this day favourably receiv'd, because generally Practised, I may instance in the Case of *Intemperance*. For was Drunkenness less follow'd, than with Grief we must confess it is, a Frown wou'd be cast upon the reeling Sot, and we shou'd bless our selves at the beastly Sight. But when we behold the Noon-day Riots, and see them openly follow'd in the Face of the Sun, whilst Men glory in their Shame, the Vulgar at least have harmless Notions of the Vice, and think it a small, if any, Sin.

This is the Consequence of this pu-blick and national Crime, by which God has just Reason to be provok'd, and we have just Cause to fear the Judgments of Heaven to hang over our Heads. To think well of the Vice, or to take Pleasure in those that do Ill, is next to practising it. But it shall be my endeavour in this *Essay* to lay before us such Considerations, as shall dissuade us from both.

When

When Wickedness becomes Barefac'd and Modish, 'tis an *ungrateful Office* to oppose it, and the *Undertaker* is sure to meet with the *Contradiction* of Sinners. Our Saviour speaks from his own Experience, saying, *John vii. 7. me the World hateth, because I testify of it, that the Works thereof are Evil.* St. Paul had occasion to speak in the same Strain, when he thus expostulates with the *Galatians, Gal. iv. 16. Am I therefore become your Enemy, because I tell you the Truth?* But they did not desist from their Proceedings, notwithstanding these Disadvantages. They boldly rebuk'd Vice, and left the same Command to all good Christians.

And indeed *Reason* requires the same at our Hands. Because the more prevailing any Corruption is, the more absolute necessity there is to oppose it. For the longer it is continued, the more provoking it will be to God, and the more fatal upon the Conversations of Men. And he, that is Remiss in this Duty, and ceaseth to reprove, because the Generation is Perverse and does not love to hear of it; is either *afraid of Man or ashamed of Christ.*

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Therefore

Therefore tho' Drunkenness in this Age prevails like a mighty Torrent, and the Writing against it be like pulling out a right Eye; yet upon this account it is more necessary to lay before us the *Sin*, and *Danger*, and *Folly* of it; not to upbraid any for having been bad, but to encourage them to become better. For when they have a sense and conviction of the *Duty* of Temperance and the *Sin* of Drunkenness, 'tis to be hop'd, that they will be engag'd speedily to repent of the One, and sincerely to practise the Other. Because they will perceive how Heinous it is before God, and how many Dangers they will naturally run upon, if they continue Impenitent and will not Reform and Amend.

To prevent Obscurity and Confusion, we must settle the true *Notions* and *Bounds* of things, before we can proceed in any Point. Which in the present Case wou'd be a most difficult Task, were we to take the *Opinions* and *Measures* of some indulgent *Lovers* and *Favourers* of the Vice. But we have more constant and standing Rules to be our Guides, than the extravagant Humours

and

and Allowances of vain Persons. Rules, by which we may certainly judge our selves, whether we be Intemperate or no, and how far and in what degree.

It must be confess'd, that the present Enquiry is neither to be answer'd nor determin'd by any precise *Quantity* of Drink, absolutely speaking. For this is a very Precarious way; nay, impossible to be prescrib'd. Because the same quantity, which is *necessary* for one Constitution, wou'd be *Intemperance* in another.

But I will lay down three Rules, by which the true Nature of Drunkenness may be known. *First*, When a Man drinks more, than his *Health* and *Constitution* will bear. *Secondly*, When he drinks more, than will consist with the true *Use* of the *Faculties* and *Powers* of his *Mind* and *Soul*. *Thirdly*, When he drinks more, than his *Circumstances* will afford.

First, A Man may be said to be Intemperate, when he drinks more than his *Health* and *Constitution* will bear. Thirst is a natural Disease which we bring along with us into the World. And

100 Of Drunkenness

Drinking is the Remedy, which Nature has provided for it. Which makes it necessary for us to use it. Because all Persons are oblig'd to continue and preserve their Life and Being by any lawful Means. And yet we are not so confin'd, as to drink no more, than will just keep us alive. The Goodness of Heaven has not so narrowly Stinted us, but we may drink sometimes for *Recreation, honest Delight, and the Well-Being of our Bodies.*

But when other Ends are propos'd different from these, nay, which absolutely contradict the whole Design and Allowance of Nature, when the Point is carried on to such a height as to destroy the *Being and Well-Being of our Bodies*; this is a great degree of Intemperance and can be call'd by no other Name. For if the Spirits of a Man be inflam'd, instead of clear'd; or if he destroys his natural Heat and drinks himself into a Fever; or if he loses his Strength and fills his Body with gross Humours; or if he continues so long at the Wine, till he becomes uneasy in his Constitution, and a Disorder begins, till his Head grows Dizzy and his Feet fail him, and the sad Effects are

are either *felt* by himself or *visible* to the World, 'tis no rash Judgment, if we pronounce him guilty of Excess.

Secondly, A Man may be said to be *Intemperate*, when he drinks more, than will consist with the *true Use* of the *Faculties* and *Powers* of his *Soul* and *Mind*. This latter instance of Excess will naturally follow the former. It is not possible, but a disorder'd *Body* must create a disorder'd *Head*. Because there is so strong an Union between *both*, and so mutual a Communication and a reciprocal Acting upon one another.

But this Case is to be extended a little farther. Because a Man may disorder his Head, when he does not disorder his Body. It does frequently happen, that some Men's Brains are *so Weak*, that they are not able to bear that Quantity of Drink, which wou'd otherwise do their Bodies *no harm*; nay, which might be Safe and Useful for them. But whoever is of this Temper, and finds himself so easily Overcome, must absolutely abstain from that Quantity, which does dis temper his Reason whatever other Advantages might really be made. For tho' *Health* be an invaluable Ble-

sing, and we are strictly oblig'd to pre-serve it ; yet we must not do it by a Sin, as Drunkenness most certainly is. And that most certainly is Drunkenness which takes away the free Use and Exercise of his intellectual Faculties, and darkens the Understanding, and weakens the Judgment, and hinders the Liberty of Thought, and makes a Man a fitter Companion for Beasts than rational Creatures. According to various Constitutions the Effect will sooner or later appear ; But in such a Case every Person must judge for himself. For I only lay down a Rule, whereby he may make this Judgment. And when a Man drinks to such a Degree, that he loses the Government of himself, and the Beast rides the *Man*, that his Tongue begins to Faulter, and his Discourse proves APIFY, and his Mind so Besotted as to disable him from giving a rational Answer, and his Soul becomes unfit for any thing that is Serious and Divine, when his Will is uncontrollable, and his Affections inflam'd, and his Imaginations heighten'd, and every thing out of order amongst his inward Faculties ; when these Effects begin to appear, it is a certain Sign that he is guilty of Excess or an immoderate Use of strong Drink.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, A Man may be said to be guilty of Excess, when he drinks more, than his Circumstances will afford, tho' he shou'd neither impair the Health of his Body, nor disturb the Faculties of his Soul. Because every Man is oblig'd to measure his Expences by his Income, and not by another's Spending. And without this he can neither be Honest nor Just. So that he who has but a small Estate must seldom come into Company, and much less into such Company as may tempt him to go beyond what he can allow, tho' he might safely and innocently go in other Respects. And if he will indulge this humour, he may justly be call'd an excessive Person, and it tendeth to Poverty. Which is most certainly true, if he had only himself to maintain. But much more, when he has a Family to provide for. And when a Man drinks that at Night, which he has Work'd for all the Day, and spends perhaps on the Sabbath what he has Earn'd all the Week before, and which shou'd have kept his Family all the Week after, I can say nothing to excuse or extenuate the Practice. For, granting his Body and Mind to be in no Disorder, he is however guilty of Excess. Because

whatever a Man *spends* with the *Crys* and *Wants* of a Wife and Children, he spends *intemperately*. I had not mention'd this kind of Excess, was not the Practice common in the World, and the Consequences of it fatal and pernicious.

After all these Rules, which I have laid down, it must be confess'd that there are *Degrees* of Drunkenness. For if he be Intemperate, who offends only against one of them, much more is he, who offends against more, or all of them. If he be Intemperate, who by Drinking disorders his Body, he is much more so who distempers his *Reason* as well as disorders his Body; and he again is still much more so, who ruins his *Estate* at the same time, that he destroys the Strength of his Body and Mind.

S E C T.

S E C T. II.

The Sinfulness of Drunkenness in General.

GOD in his good Providence designing our necessary Refreshment has afforded us the Conveniences of Life and poureth his Benefits upon us. But if we waste any Blessing that God in Bounty bestows, and use it to very ill Purpose, this is thwarting the *End* and *Design* of the *Gift*, and crossing the *Intentions* of our *All-sufficient Governour*. Now certainly he that drinks intemperately, drinks when he has no manner of Reason or Occasion for so doing, and when he might as well, nay much better, pour it upon the Ground. This extravagant Profuseness and luxurious Wasting is really a Sin even against the Law of Nature, and acting contrary to the Ends for which the Blessing was granted. And what is this acting contrary to the Ends of the Creature, but directly to Sin against the Creatour. I cannot see any Consequence more plain and Natural, were we to proceed only upon the Principles of Reason. We are allow'd

allow'd to Recruit, Strengthen, and Refresh Nature, to drink so far as is consistent with Reason, Health, and Virtue: But, if when we are indulg'd this Liberty by God, we will use it intemperately, and transgress those Measures which he has set us, and contradict those Ends for which it was design'd; there is a guilty *Abuse* made of this *Liberty*, for which we stand accountable to God.

The Punishments which do generally attend or follow Intemperance, do farther prove its Guilt. For the loss of Reputation, of Health, of Parts, of Strength, and of Estate, are the genuine and natural Fruits of it, as I shall hereafter more largely discover. But in the mean time these Punishments must be look'd upon as the *Penal Sanctions* of the *natural Law*, and are convincing Arguments that we shou'd not follow such a Course of Life. God wou'd not entail so many Curses upon it, was not the Practice Sinful, and if he had not a Mind that it shou'd not be pursu'd. When we perceive from the Causes and Effects of things, that all Excess is Prejudicial to the Interest and Happiness of Men; the God of Nature by these

these legible Characters has afforded sufficient Notice and Information, that we shou'd be Sober, that we ought not to be Guilty of Excess.

And altho' without the Benefit of Revelation we are certain, that Drunkenness is a Sin : Yet Heaven's reveal'd Will added to the Strength of Man's unenlighten'd Understanding still fixes the Guilt more deeply upon Conscience. We are thus commanded by our Saviour, *Luke xxi. 34. Take heed to your selves, least at any time your Hearts be overcharged with Surfeiting and Drunkenness.* This Lesson is taught us by St. Paul, *Rom. xiii. 13. Walk honestly as in the day, not in Rioting and Drunkenness.* And in *Ephes. v. 18.* He exhorts us saying, *Be not drunk with Wine, wherein is Excess; but be fill'd with the Spirit.* From St. Peter, we receive this particular Precept, *i Pet. v. 8. Be Sober, be Vigilant.* Now without any enlargement upon Passages so express, it must be acknowledg'd, that no one can disorder his Body or Mind with an immoderate Use of strong Drink, without being Guilty of a wilful Breach of the Divine Commands.

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In this Section I shall only add from the Scriptures the Denunciation of God's Judgements against this Vice. The Prophet *Isaiah* speaks thus, chap. v. 11, 12. *Woe unto them that rise up early in the Morning, that they may follow strong Drink, that continue until Night, till Wine inflame them. And the Harp and the Viol, the Tabret and Pipe, and Wine are in their Feasts:* But they regard not the Work of the Lord, neither consider the Operation of his Hands. As for those whose Brains and Strength are such, as to enable them to spend whole Days in Drinking without being actually Drunk, there is a heavy Woe belongs to them, and is set down in the 22 Verse, *Woe unto them that are mighty to drink Wine, and Men of Strength to mingle strong Drink.* The Prophet *Habbakuk* pronounces the Judgments of God against those who make others Drunk, and place that horrid Guilt to their own account as being the Causes of it. Chap. ii. 15. *Woe unto him that giveth his Neighbour drink: That putteth thy Bottle to him, and makest him drunken.* And as for the Gospel Threatnings, they are undeniably against all these Sins.

Now

Now what God approveth, he rewardeth; and is severe against nothing but what is displeasing to him. What is displeasing to him must be Evil; because he hateth nothing but Sin. And therefore since God has taken care by his Prophets, his Son, and his Apostles, to declare such particular Woes against all kind of Drunkenness, and since *Tribulation and Anguish, and the Wrath of God is only revealed from Heaven against every Soul of Man that doth Evil,* Drunkenness from this Consequence must be a very heinous Crime. Think of these things, O ye Foolish and Unwise, and do not dare the Almighty to his Face, nor provoke his Power to Thunder-strike you.

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S E C T. III.

The peculiar Aggravation of intemperate
DRINKING in Christians.

First, The Grace of God that bringeth Salvation, hath appeared to all Men, teaching us that we shou'd live Soberly in this present World. Sobriety, then is very becoming the Gospel of Christ, highly agreeable to the Precepts thereof, and none of us can be intemperate without contemning at the same time the Authority of God, and dishonouring the Name by which we are called. For though the Christians Liberty extends to a free, cheerful, and contented Use of the World, and we are not tied up with a *Touch not, taste not, handle not*; yet we are to be excessive in nothing. It is expected, and reasonably expected, that our Moderation in this Sense shou'd be known unto all Men.

When therefore we Christians transgres the Virtuous Mean, and go beyond the Limits we are set; the Doctrine of the Gospel condemns our Practice, and we loudly dishonour the Religion we profess. What more disgraceful

Of Drunkenness. III

ful Reflection can be put upon a Man, than a Disagreement with his Character? A cowardly Soldier, a clownish Courtier, an ignorant Scholar, and an impolitick Statesman, are not more inconsistent than a Drunken *Christian*. And if in the former Cases Men are esteem'd justly Ridiculous, much more in the last.

Let us then consider who we are, whose Names we bear, and whose Religion we have undertook; and endeavour by Sobriety to adorn our Profession and answer the Obligations we have laid upon our selves. Excess is indeed condemn'd by the Law of Nature, attended with Natural Punishments to deter us from it, and so Heathens themselves are without Excuse. But if *Christians* be not Sober, they are much more inexcusable. Because they sin against a greater Light, and with open Eyes run into such Excesses, as they know and believe to be condemn'd by the Gospel, which they own to be the Revelation of the Divine Will to the World by his Son, and pretend to square their Actions by. When Faith and Practice disagree, we sin directly against the Force of Conscience. And what Guilt can be more heinous!

Secondly,

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Secondly, As our Christian Institution in it self requires us to live Soberly : So it is an Aggravation in Christians to be intemperate, because it is contrary to that Watchfulness which is enjoin'd them upon several Accounts.

We are to watch and prepare for Death and Judgment. And since both these are uncertain as to the Time, we ought always to take heed, that we be not overcharg'd with Drunkenness, least that Day come upon us unawares ; lest that Day surprize us, and find us unready to appear before the Lord.

We are to watch, and watch unto Prayer. But how shall he perform this Duty every Morning and Evening at the least (which is every Christian's indispensable Duty) who is Drunk when he goes to Bed, and scarce Sober when he Rises,

We are to watch and prepare against the Wiles of Satan, the Treachery of our Lusts and the Deceitfulness of the World. But how shall we be able to do all this except we be Sober. The Apostle sets Sobriety before Vigilance, and

and immediately adds the Reason of it, *Be Sober, be Vigilant, because your Adversary the Devil, as a roaring Lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.* This is equally true of the rest of our Spiritual Enemies, against whom we can never securely watch, if by Drunkenness we lose our Government and our Guard. In such a Case we openly expose our selves to be conquer'd.

Thirdly, Intemperance is an Aggravation in Christians, As it resists and drives away the Motions and Operations of the *Holy Spirit*, so plentifully afforded by the Gospel. The Apostle's Words *Eph. v. 18.* do imply their Inconsistency, *Be not Drunk with Wine, but be filled with the Spirit.* For the Disjunction shews, that both cannot be together, that a *Christian* cannot be filled with the *Spirit*, who alloweth himself to be Drunk. Every Act of Sin forces the *Holy Spirit* to retire and withdraw his Influence. But this of *Intemperance* and that of *Lust*, do more directly hinder its Motions and Operations. Because our Bodies are the Temples of the *Holy Ghost*, and these are Sins which flow from the Body, and do disorder

I our

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our Bodies ; and by consequence render them unfit Habitations or Temples, for the Residence of the *Holy Ghost*.

And what a provoking Sin must it be to do despite to the Spirit of God, and to render our selves incapable of receiving the Benefits of its Influence. Since our Saviour was so kind as to promise it to us, to purchase it for us, to send it at the Beginning, and continue it ever since to every *Christian* to assist him in such a Measure, as shall build him up in *Christian Perfection*; and since without this Holy Spirit, we are destitute of Light and Strength to know and perform our Duty, and given up to the Conduct of blind Passions, vile Lusts and corrupt Affections, we must be strangely ungrateful to our Blessed Saviour and highly injurious to our selves, when we quench its Motions, and drown its Calls, and force him as it were, to retire and leave us to our selves. And since nothing is so contrary to the Spirit as Drunkenness, a Drunken *Christian* must be a high and presumptuous Offender.

Lastly,

Lastly, The Inconsistency of Intemperance with the *true Hope* of a *Christian*, makes the Practice of an aggravating Nature under the *Gospel*. With Difficulty Men are brought to entertain hard Thoughts of what they love; and this occasions some to flatter themselves that it shall be well with them at the last, though they do go on in wicked Courses. But stay a while, vain Man, and consider, what will become of thy Soul eternally, if thou continuest still in the same Excess and Riot. Dost thou expect to be Saved with all thy Lusts about thee? If this be thy Hope, what Grounds dost thou build upon? or who hath told thee, that thou may'st wallow in thy Intemperance without endangering thy Salvation? It is well that thou believest a future State of Rewards and Punishments; but he, who brought *Life and Immortality to light through the Gospel*, has prescrib'd the Way for its Attainment, and has positively determin'd that the Wicked shall go away into Everlasting Punishment, but the Righteous into Life Eternal. And yet if this will not satisfie, the Apostle does particularly declare, that Drunkards are of the Number of those Persons, who

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are to be excluded the Kingdom of *Heaven.*

After such a Proof, what hast thou, O Sinner, to comfort thy Spirits and raise thy Assurance of Eternal Happiness. When *Christ* and his Apostle has told thee beforehand, that if thou continuest impenitent and wilt proceed in thy riotous Course, thou shalt be eternally miserable; what Reason hast thou to imagine, that he will not be as good as his Word? He is the God of Truth, and will be just as well as merciful. Dally no longer with the Almighty, nor provoke him to Wrath by thy loose Conversation, lest his Goodness, incens'd by thy Ingratitude, at last be forced to triumph in thy Ruin. Thy Intemperance may probably ruin thee here, for thou hast all the Reason in the World to fear it; but it will certainly ruin thee hereafter. And therefore have some Compassion upon thy Soul, and do not prefer a Glass of *Liquor* before the *Hopes of Immortality.*

S E C T.

S E C T. IV.

*The evil Consequences of DRUNKENNESS
to Man in a Natural Capacity.*

BY Man in a *Natural Capacity*, I mean, as he is a *Creature* born to live in *this World*, and made up of a *Body* and *Mind*. And taking him in this Sense, Drunkenness is very dangerous, as destroying the valuable Blessings of this Life, and the real Perfections of both Parts of his Constitution.

First, Because it weakens the *Strength* and destroys the *Health* of the *Body*.

It must be confess'd indeed, that this Vice does not always work its Effect immediately. Some Persons of strong Constitutions may pass over many Excesses without any visible Appearances of Harm at present. And I doubt not but *one Example* of this kind does more encourage some vain and profligate Persons, than *Twenty Instances* to the contrary can be able to dissuade. Which at once exposes their *Weakness* and their *Prejudice*.

But after all, sober and thinking Persons will tell us, that Intemperance dashes in pieces infirm Tempers, and insensibly decays the best Constitutions, by laying in them the Seeds of future Diseases. From *Reason* it is impossible to imagine, that it shou'd be otherwise. Because Health is an even Temperament of Heat and Cold, Drought and Moisture in our Bodies. Whereas Excess gives these Natural Qualities an Unnatural Predominancy, which turns the Evenness of our Constitution and is prejudicial to its Strength and Vigour.

And if we still want farther Conviction, *Experience* must be our next Informer, and that consulted, will give us Satisfaction. For in Persons, whom we see to be Drunk, we may perceive a mighty Disorder and Alteration, and how all the Powers and Faculties of their Bodies are incapable of performing their proper Functions in that regular Manner as they ought. And who can imagine, but this must prey upon the Vital Parts, destroy the Natural Flame, fill the Body with corroding Humours, put the Blood into a violent Motion, and by several other Ways fret and wear away

away the Strength of a Man. It is not unusual to hear some complain of an aking Head, and a sick Stomach after an Excess, and they feel what I am proving and they can't deny. In that little time that any of us have been in the World, I make no Question but we are able to produce several Instances of Persons, who by Intemperance have shaked their Glass to make it run the faster, and sent themselves into the other World much sooner than either God or Nature ever intended. Some have been found dead in the very Fit, leaving the World in an impenitent State and with unrepented Guilt. Whilst others by a riotous Debauch have been so disorder'd, as to feel the sad Effects of it all the Days of their Lives, either from the Load it self, or the Quarrels and Contentions which frequently are raised, or from other Dangers which they commonly fall into and are not able to foresee and prevent.

And since this is the Fruit of Intemperance, no one can deny that it is fatal and pernicious. Because it destroys a sound Body, which is one of the greatest Blessings of Life in it self, and which also gives a Relish to all other Temporal Blessings.

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Secondly, The Consequences of Drunkenness are *Evil* and *Dangerous* to a Man in a *Natural Capacity*, because it has a bad Influence upon the *Understanding* and the *Powers of the Mind*.

That a clear Understanding, a sound Reason, a retentive Memory, a quick Apprehension, and a stable Judgment, are Perfections and Blessings, I shall take for granted. And that these are mightily impair'd, and weaken'd, and sometimes totally lost by Intemperance, I shall now prove from Reason and the Experience of the World.

We now see through a Glass darkly, and this Glass is our Body, and as this is well or ill dispos'd, the Vision of the Soul is either *Clear* or *Obscure*. From hence it follows, that the more a Man indulges his Appetites in sensual Pleasures, he grows more weak and divided in his Thoughts. Fumes and Vapours are rais'd from a constant and immoderate Use of them, which disturb the Brain, and are to the inward Faculties, what Mists are to the Bodily Eyes. All Vice proceeds from Ignorance, and causes it, by besotting and clouding the

the Understanding; but Intemperance does eminently so. Because this Vice does move our Passions. And then, as a very * Ingenious and Learned Man observes, the Motion of our Passions ferments the Spirits, and the Fermentation of the Spirits agitates the Blood, and by Agitation raises all the fæculent and drossy Parts of it, and makes it, like a troubled Fountain, thick and muddy. Thus the Man is in a manner out of his Senses, till his over heated Imagination cools, and his disturbed Humours settle, and Time recovers him to himself.

But did we not know the *Manner* how it works, the *Effect* however is indubitable. It is experimentally found that Excess makes even Wise Men Brutish in their Knowledge. In the midst of an intemperate Riot, it is easy to observe, what apish Gestures, what ridiculous Mirth, what noisy Nonsense, what wild Opinions, what absurd Arguments, what dull Apprehensions, what forgetful Memories, what inconsistent Reasonings, what foolish Answers, what mad Frolics, Men are naturally betray'd to. Where then is the Understanding of a Drunkard? I cannot imagine

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gine how to give any Account of the dangerous Follies they are guilty of, without having Recourse to this Expedient, that the Vice has put out the *Eye* of *Reason*, and quite perverted the *Stability* of their *Judgment*. And though Sleep and Time may help them in some measure to the Use of Reason; yet those, who commonly practise the Vice, are generally Sots even when they are Sober, and are render'd incapable clearly to discern even Natural Truths, but much more Truths of a Moral Nature. There is a Mist and Darkness left, which perhaps is never quite dispell'd. It is a melancholy Reflection to consider, how many Persons God has sent into the World, endued with extraordinary Natural Parts, which have supported their Parents Hopes and fill'd the World with swelling Expectations of reaping a mighty Benefit; and yet when they were in a Capacity to prove a *Blessing* to their Country, and a *Comfort* to their Friends, and might have been Famous in their Time, and done Good in their Generation, how have they *weaken'd* these Natural Powers as well as *neglected* the Use and Improvement of them by tarrying long at the Wine, and running into the same Excess of Riot with other Men.

Whilst

Whilst others again by the same Course, have *totally lost* their Reason, Memory, and Judgment, and become in a manner Fools and Idiots, *twice Children*, once by *Nature*, and once by *Vice*. And it hinders in all the true and right Use of our rational and intellectual Faculties.

Thirdly, The Consequences of Drunkenness are evil and dangerous to a Man in a *Natural Capacity*, because it ruins a Man's Estate and tendeth to Poverty.

Poverty is usually the Issue of Drunkenness, and can no more be supported without mighty Expences, than a Lamp can continue in a shining and vigorous Flame without being supply'd with Oil. This made the Wiseman to assert, *Prov. xxii. 17. He that loveth Wine, shall not be rich.* And again, *chap. xxiii. 21. The Drunkard and the Glutton shall come to Poverty.* Which Expressions are verified, not only upon the bare account of the Money that is spent, but upon some other immediate and natural Consequences. For though some Persons of mean Fortune and narrow Circumstances have really themselves bezled away all that ever they were worth: Yet it may seem improbable

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improbable that others shou'd drink away any considerable Estate, did they allow themselves to be Drunk every Day of their Lives.

But even in this Case, allowing that the Charge of what a Man drinks himself, cannot of it self exhaust his Estate, there are however such Fruits of the Vice, as may by Consequence reduce it to Nothing. Of which I give this following Account. It often puts him upon *Treating* of others, that they may be encourag'd to keep him Company in his Sin; And this wicked Generosity must waste his Substance. It takes up his Time, and encourages *Idleness*; and this will cloath a Man with Rags. It provoketh to *Lust*; and this will bring him to a Morsel of Bread. He neglects his *Business* and proper *Calling*, and spends his Days in riotous Company; whereas *the diligent Hand maketh rich, and he that keepeth Company with vain Persons shall have Poverty enough*. It peryerts his *Reason*, so that he is not able to judge of Matters, to dispatch Busines, to know the World, to determine Affairs, to compare his Expence with his Income, to apprehend, foresee, and improve all fitting Opportunities for his Advantage; and.

and therefore becomes a Prey to every designing and over-reaching Knave. It forfeits the *Favour* and *Blessing* of God; and without God's Blessing no one must expect to Prosper, Endeavours and Industry will be in vain. So that by *all* these Consequences it does appear what a direct Tendency there is in Drunkenness to keep a Man from *getting* and *preserving* an Estate.

I cou'd heartily wish, that the World did not afford us so many Examples as it does, to Illustrate the Truth of what I have been proving. But the Number is so great, that I may leave it to every one's own particular Observation, hoping that he will make a wise Use and Improvement of it, and look upon it, and receive Instruction, and take heed from the Misfortunes of Others, least he be brought into the same Snare.

Fourthly, The Consequences of Drunkenness are Evil and Dangerous to a Man in a *natural Capacity*, because it lessens his *Worth*, and blasts his Reputation. For Honour is the *outward Respect* that is paid to, and the *inward Esteem* that is entertain'd of, a Person, by Wise and good Men. But wise Men
and

and good Men have not any valuable Opinion of a Drunkard. The concurrent Approbation of such he is sure to want.

'Tis true, there is an outward Respect to be given to some Persons in Authority, tho' they be never so irregular in their lives; and there is a common Civility to be offer'd to Sinners: And neither of these will be denied the most intemperate Persons from the Wisest and Best of Men. But at the same time there is no inward Veneration of them, or their Practice. Both are treated in their Thoughts with Scorn and Contempt, and upon prudent occasions they express their Abhorrence and Dislike. And except an inward Reverence, formed by a mature Judgment, be added to our Words and Actions, a Person cannot be said either to be honour'd or deserve it.

And what a miserable thing is it for a Man to survive the Funeral of his Reputation, since a good Name is a pleasing Advantage to our selves, and renders us Useful and Beneficial to others. I must confess amongst a Crew of loose Companions Intemperance may pass for

a Top-improving Quality. But such are not the true Standards of Honour, and he must be a very weak Man, who shall value himself upon the Applause of such Fools and Flatterers, and at the same time despise the Opinions of those, whose Judgments alone are to be regarded.

So that if a *healthful Constitution*, or a *clear Reason*, or a *competent Estate*, or a *good Report* amongst Men be valuable Blessings in this Life, as I think they are universally acknowledg'd, it must of Necessity follow, that the Consequences of Drunkenness are Evil and Dangerous. Because it makes a Man diseased in his Body, dark in his Understanding, poor in his Fortune, and *infamous* in his Reputation. And since these are the Effects of the Vice, it is very Prejudicial to a Man consider'd in a *natural Capacity*, as he is a *Creature* born to live in *this World* and made up of *Body* and *Mind*.

SECT.

S E C T. V.

*The evil Consequences of Drunkenness to a
Man in a civil Capacity.*

BY *Man* in a *civil Capacity*, I mean *Man* as he is a *relative Creature*, and has a Duty to pay to others, no one being born for himself alone. Now Drunkenness is very Fatal and Prejudicial, let his Relation in the World be what it will. Because it will render him Incapable of Managing his Station as he ought, and of doing that good, which by Sobriety he might very well perform. For be he *Married*, or only the *Master* of a Family, or in any other Place either of *Church* or *State*, he is not so Serviceable as he might or ought to be.

First, Drunkenness is very Fatal and Dangerous in the *relative State of Marriage*. Where a Man may be consider'd, either as a *Husband*, or a *Parent*.

If as a *Husband*, it must be remembred, that the great Design of Marriage, is mutual Conversation, and by that to be a Help and a Comfort to each other. But where lies the *Love*, the *Care*,
or

or the *Conversation* of a Drunkard, who spends his Time, his Estate, and his Senses in Riotous Living. It must needs be a Melancholy Life to sit at Home alone, waiting Day after Day, and sometimes till Midnight and longer, full of Cares, of Sighs, of Fears, for the Return of a Sot, who, when he is come, is either Apish, Dumb, Raging, or ill Humour'd. And except the Wife be very Wise and very Good, Quarrels and Contentions will naturally ensue. Miserie will find a Tongue to speak; and it is too common to hear, how Families, nay, whole Neighbourhoods, are disturb'd upon such Occasions.

But this is still more Aggravating, if we consider him as a *Parent*. Because he is obliged to Provide for the *Temporal* Subsistence of his Children, and to take Care of the *Eternal* Welfare of their Souls. Whereas *neither* of these can be either safely or substantially Promoted, except he leaves off his intemperate Courses.

He cannot Provide for the *Temporal* Subsistence of his Children. Because he frequently Spends that upon himself, which shou'd Feed, Cloath, and Support

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port them, and Place them in the World in such a way, as to be a Foundation to live, provided they be Honest and Industrious. Or else by his own ill Vices he derives a Curse upon his Posterity, instead of a Blessing, and by this Means brings them to Poverty. Many such Persons have left an innocent Offspring in Want and Misery, either to the Parish for Relief, or to the Charitable Disposition of their next Neighbours for a Morsel of Bread.

And then as for their *Souls*, how miserably must their *eternal Welfare* be provided for. It cannot be expected, that he shou'd take Care of their Souls, who will not take Care of his own. Or if he shou'd seem to be more kind to them than himself, and give them some *cold Instructions* which he in Practice is not willing to follow; yet it may reasonably be fear'd, that they will be *as coldly receiv'd*, and that his ill Example will more prevail than his good Advice.

Now after all this Proof, what a sad thing must it be to contribute to the Temporal and Eternal Misery of the Fruit of our Bodies, to be instrumental

to

to bring Children into the World and then to leave them to struggle with the *Misfortunes of this Life*, and the Sorrows of the *Next*. Who that considers these Effects, wou'd not forego the Vice and break it off by Repentance.

Secondly, Drunkenness is very Fatal and Pernicious, if a Man be consider'd only as a *Master* of a Family.

Every Person in such a Relation is oblig'd not only to save his *own* Soul, but also to take Care that all those in his *Family* do their Duty also. And if they miscarry thro' his Neglect, the Guilt will lie at his Door, for which he must be accountable to God. To avoid the one, and perform the other, his House must be kept in a constant Regularity, and his Carriage manag'd with Wisdom and Goodness, and his Discourse deliver'd with Seriousness and Gravity, and his Dealings mixt with exact Justice, and all must be crown'd with daily Prayer.

But how is a Drunkard able to perform all this, who perhaps is a greater Stranger at *Home* than *A broad*? 'Tis too well known how little order is observ'd,

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when the Eye and Presence of a Master is long wanting. Besides, He can never rule his House, well, who cannot, or will not, rule himself. A disorderly Head will be attended with disorderly Members! When the Master of the Family is bad, it is *beyond Expectation* that the Servants shou'd be good. His ill Example and vicious Life will have a malignant Influence in forming the Manners of those under his Care.

Nay farther, it may be, he *cannot*, or if he can, 'tis very Probable, he *will not*, give them good Instructions; it may be he *cannot* because he does not know them himself. A Resolution to continue in Sin makes Men backward to be inform'd of their Duty, or, being Carnally given, they *cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God*. *For they are Foolishness to them. Because they are spiritually discern'd.* And how then can he teach others, who wants to be taught himself? Or, if he is able to do this, 'tis very probable, his *Inclinations* will not lead him to do it. Because thereby he wou'd reproach himself, and be condemn'd out of his own Mouth. But suppose he was both *able* and *willing* to give them good Instructions,

ons, they wou'd make but faint Impressions, so long as he reformed not his own Ways, nor continued Sober.

So that, either thro' the want of his Presence, or want of Example, or want of Instruction, his spiritual Care cou'd not be manag'd to any good Effect. And I know not, what Answer such a One can make to God, when he calls him to an Account for having neglected or destroy'd the Vertue and good Manners perhaps of his whole Family thro' his own ill Conduct.

Thirdly, Drunkenness is very Evil and Dangerous, if we consider Man put into any Eminent and important Office in the State. If a Drunkard is not Qualify'd to be a Friend in private Matters, much less so in those of a more publick Nature, where the Lives, and Liberties, and Fortunes of a Multitude are concern'd. He loses those excellent Parts which might be very Beneficial to the Publick, and wants that Judgment and Circumspection which is necessary in all Stations, but more especially so in those Stations, where mighty Difficulties occur, and weighty Affairs are determin'd, and a greater Trust is repos'd. And tho' such a Person may be able to go-

vern and dispatch Business in his Sober Intervals ; yet he certainly infatuates his Reason, and clouds his Understanding, and is not so Useful, as otherwise he might be, either to God, his Queen, or his Country.

Besides, the Examples of such Persons are more Fatal to the World, than those of the Vulgar. Because their Stations make their Vices the more Eminent, Visible and Known, and they have more numerous *Dependants* and *Imitators*. And the World is too apt to receive ill Impressions, and mimick the Vices of those, whose Vertues they overlook. Which made the wise Son of Syrach say, Eccle. x. 2. *As the Judge of the People is himself, so are his Officers: And what manner of Man the Ruler of the City is, such are all they that dwell therein.*

Fourthly, Drunkenness is very Fatal and Pernicious, if we consider Man in a Spiritual Office, as he is a *Minister* in the Church of Christ. Shou'd we go so far as to grant, that his Intemperance wou'd not produce an Ignorance in Divine and Moral Truths which is hard to be suppos'd; and granting that he wou'd not decline to treat of the Vice, which he

is publickly known to be notoriously Guilty off: Yet 'tis very likely he wou'd do more harm than good. For tho' he cou'd preach like an *Angel* from Heaven, yet except his *Life* give Weight to his *Words*, and his *Practice* proves his *Doctrine*, and his *Faith* is seen by his *Works*, it will be to no purpose. A bad Man may speak Truth, but, except the World be New Moulded, it will not be readily receiv'd from him. The meanest Person can argue against a dissolute Clergy-Man. Upon so unhappy an Occasion good Men are *Offended*, wicked Men *Encouraged*, his *Reputation* is *Blasted*, and his *Talents* render'd in a manner *Useless*. So very Fatal and Mischievous is this Vice in those who wait at the Altar, whilst they cannot Preach of it in Pu-blick with any good Effect, nor rebuke it in private with Courage and Boldness.

Since then Drunkenness is of so ill Consequence, if we consider Man, either as a *Husband*, or a *Parent*, or a *Friend*, or a *Master* of a Family, or as a *Governour* either in the *Civil* or *spiritual Society*, it must of Necessity follow, that the evil Consequences of Drunkenness are great, if we consider Man in a *civil Capacity*,

Capacity, as he is a *relative Creature*, and has a Duty to pay to others.

S E C T. VI.

The evil Consequences of DRUNKENNESS and to a Man in a Religious Capacity.

BY Man in a *Religious Capacity*, I mean, as he is a Creature capable of understanding the Principles of Religion, and apprehending a Deity, and Worshiping him ; and the *only* Creature too under Heaven, there being some glimmerings of Reason in Brutes, but none at all of Religion. Now taking him in this Sense, Drunkenness is very Fatal and Pernicious. Because it destroys that Faculty which shou'd examine and discern the Grounds and Doctrines of Religion ; because it renders a Man Incapable of performing those Duties which are Essential to Religion ; And because it is the unhappy Occasion of many other Sins.

First, Because it destroys that Faculty which shou'd examine and discern the Grounds and Doctrines of Religion.

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Natural Religion is built upon right Reason; and reveal'd Religion is the Improvement of natural Light. But still Reason is concern'd in examining the Nature of the Doctrines which are Reveal'd, and the Nature of the Evidence which confirms the Revelation. And therefore a Man's Knowledge and Faith as to Divine Matters, must be according to his Improvement in Reason. As that is, either Sound or Feeble, so will his Knowledge be either Dark or Clear, and his Faith either Weak or Strong.

Now Intemperance plainly defaces Reason, and consequently keeps a Person from examining and discerning the Motives upon which he shou'd believe, and the Principles by which he shou'd be govern'd. Truth is not so obvious, as to force it self upon the Mind. There must be Attention, Seriousness, Impartiality, Consideration, Study, and weighing of Arguments. But an intemperate Person finds neither Leisure nor Time to think, and wants a fit Temper to consider, *what* he is to believe, and *why*; *what* he is to do and *how*. And what can this produce but a stupid Ignorance.

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But allowing that he has *some* Understanding in these Matters, his Knowledge must be *imperfect*. For as to the Grounds of Religion, either he does not clearly know, or does not actually consider them. And as to the Doctrines of Religion there are some which he either wilfully overlooks or favourably interprets. For resolute Inclination claps a strange Bias upon the Mind.

So that the Grounds, Motives, and Extent of Divine and Moral Truths, are not, cannot be so perfect and clear to an intoxicated Brain, as to have any strong Influence either upon Faith or Manners. And upon this account Drunkenness is very pernicious to a Man as he is a *Religious Creature*. And it is farther so

Secondly, Because it renders a Man incapable of *performing* those Duties which are essential to Religion.

This follows from the former, For as Knowledge without Reason and Consideration is unattainable; So Practice without Knowledge is impossible. But supposing Knowledge, Practice without Sobriety is in vain expected. He, who

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is unfit for every thing else, is the most unfit for the Duties of Religion, for the Service of God, and the Salvation of his Soul. For both these require the most fixed Attention, and the clearest Thought, and the deepest Consideration, and the strictest Care, and the steadiest Reason, and the most wakeful Vigilance, and the most constant Guard; In the Spiritual Warfare, there are many Enemies to encounter, many Passions to subdue, many Temptations to overcome, and many Duties to perform. And in such a Conflict we must watch, and strive, and wrestle, and fight, and labour, and pray.

But now in what a Posture of Defence shall we find a Drunkard? How is he able to oppose? Alas! He has lost his Guard, he has lost his Government, he has lost his Senses, and therefore is not in a Capacity to make any *effectual Resistance*. Much less is he dispos'd for the positive Duties of Religion, and especially for the sublime Parts of it, I mean, the *Spiritual Worship* of God in Prayer. And was he indispos'd for nothing else, but this, yet this however wou'd give his Enemies Advantage over him. For Prayer is a necessary Means

of

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of Grace. And 'tis by Grace we stand: I wou'd to God that this very particular was but seriously consider'd, and laid to Heart. From the Reason of the thing and the Commands of God, and the Examples of the Saints, it appears to be the indispensable Duty of a *Christian* to pray at least every Morning and Evening. But as I before observ'd, how is he able to perform this in an acceptable manner, who is Drunk when he goes to Bed, and scarce Sober when he rises.

Thirdly, Drunkenness is very fatal and pernicious to Man, as a *Religious Creature*, because it is the unhappy Occasion of many *other Sins*.

Sin seldom comes alone. There is usually a Chain of them linked together. This is eminently true of Intemperance, which is attended with innumerable Mischiefs, and a general Cause of all manner of Impieties. Every Temptation is too strong at such a time. I have already examin'd some of the principal Consequences of them; And from them it does appear, what a Load of Guilt it lays upon the Soul of Man, besides that which arises from its own sinful Nature, barely consider'd as a Sin in it.

it self. But there are two Particulars, which are frequently the immediate Attendants upon it, and which I shall just now mention.

The One is, that it usually betrays Men to *Quarrels* and *Contentions*. This was Solomon's Observation, *Prov. xxiii. 30, 31. Who hath Contentions? Who hath Babling? Who hath Wounds without Cause? They that tarry long at the Wine.* This has been in Fact too often true. When Men have lost the Command of themselves, every seeming Injury passes for a real Affront, which must presently be reveng'd. And then Passion meeting with Passion, Strifes and Animosities mutually begin, and Blood and Slaughter has sometimes been the Issue of them. Who, that considers these things, can vindicate such Merriments. 'Tis mad Mirth that ends in Murder.

The other Sin, into which Drunkenness does usually betray Men, is that of *Lust*, which is excited and inflamed by such Excesses and loose Discourses which do accompany them. *Rioting* and *Drunkenness* give the Corporeal Humours a strange Predominancy, and provide Fuel for *Chambering* and *Wantonness*. Rapes, Fornication,

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Fornication, Adultery, Incest, and sometimes unnatural Villany, have been the fatal and abominable Fruits thereof. It was the Prophet's Observation, Jer. v. 7. That when the Jews were fed to the full, they then committed Adultery, and assembled by Troops in the Harlot's Houses. And the Wiseman says of the Drunkard, Prov. xxiii. 33. *Thine Eyes shall behold strange Women.*

Since then Drunkenness destroys the Reason of a Man, by which he is to examine and discern the Grounds and Doctrines of Religion, and keeps him from doing that which is Good, and provokes him to commit that which is Evil, it must of necessity follow, that Drunkenness is very prejudicial to Man, as a Religious Creature.

SECT.

S E C T. V H.

The Excuses for DRUNKENNESS upon the account of Pleasure propos'd and answer'd.

IN every Action there is some *Motive* afforded and some *End* propos'd. And this is, either *Pleasure* or *Benefit*, or Both. For upon these Principles Mankind usually proceed in all their Designs. Now when I wou'd examine the *Excuses* for Drunkenness, from this Consideration, I must imagine that they are encourag'd upon the account either of *Pleasure* or *Benefit*. In this Section I am only concern'd with the *Motives* upon the account of *Pleasure*, and these must arise, either for the Sake of the *Drink*, or the Love of the *Company*, or the passing off the Time in *Mirth* and *Jollity*. I shall consider them severally in their Order, that we may perceive what little Force there is in each of them.

First, The first *Excuse* for Drunkenness upon the account of *Pleasure*, must be for the Sake of the *Drink*.

There are some indeed, who were very guilty of the Vice, that do absolutely deny

deny their Excess to arise from the Love of the Drink ; so far from this, that they plainly profess they pour down the Drink when they loath it. But shou'd we be so charitable, as to believe they speak Sincerely, as perhaps it may be true in some : Yet must it be confess'd, that the bare Pleasure of Drinking, is a great Cause that mightily prevails, if not in *all*, however in a great *many*. Because they will drink to an excessive Degree, privately and alone ; when they are by themselves and no Body sees them, they will take the Liberty to pour it down very liberally. The Practice of such can have no other Motive, but the Love they bear to the Liquor. Because they want Society and Company, or good Fellowship, the common Plea that is usually pretended and generally made.

Now I desire it may be here consider'd, that all *Pleasure* consists in *Moderation*, and that, when once the Ends and Conveniences of Nature are satisfied, the Pleasure of the Appetite ceases. But if they will urge their own Experience to the contrary, and alledge that the Appetite is not tired, even when the Body is scarce able to sustain the Load

Load it has already receiv'd, I must confess, this *unnatural Thirst* is a Mystery to me, and I cannot tell what to say of it, and know not whether it be true or false, but as they are pleas'd to declare it. But supposing it true, I must take the Freedom to let them know, that by ill Customs and Habits they have brought it upon themselves, and that such a kind of Pleasure is Brutish, Unreasonable, and Dangerous, and can but make a faint and dull Impression upon the Palate.

And how impudently do they then act, who proceed upon this Principle? Is the bare Pleasure of an unnatural Thirst any ways equivalent to the Multitude of those Evils, which the pretended Satisfaction inevitably brings? I believe, no one will maintain that it is equivalent, but when he is actually Drunk. I am sure it cannot be said with any Reason, there being no manner of Proportion between the *Pleasures of Tasting* and the *Inconveniences of Excess*. What a miserable thing is it, that whatever is Valuable in this Life and the Next, shou'd be at the Command of a greedy Taste, and tamely subject to an unruly Appetite? How mean, nay sin-

ful must it be, that Religion and Conscience must be Slaves to a Pipe, and Vassals to a Glass? And how can that be pleasant, which is mixt with Guilt and Fear? And how vain must they be in their Thoughts, who are sway'd by it?

It is a certain Maxim founded in Reason, that of *two* Evils we shou'd chuse the *least*, and that a *lesser* Evil is to be endur'd rather than a *greater* Evil shou'd be incur'd. Now, supposing to deny the Gratification of this unaccountable Thirst, was really a natural Evil or Inconvenience to us; Yet when the Gratification is attended with a greater natural Evil, or Inconvenience, than the Self-denial, we ought certainly in reason to curb our Appetite, and abstain from Drinking. For that deserves not the Name of Pleasure, which robs us of a far greater Pleasure than it brings. So that this is true, if we compare only natural Evils. But it is much more true, when we consider that it is attended with Evils of a moral Nature. For a present natural Good must be parted with, when it will rob us of a moral Good both present and future.

I have nothing more to say to this sort of Persons by way of exposing the Vanity and Weakness of their Pretence, but that they are also condemn'd by such, as are Lovers and Favourers of the Vice; who are unwilling to own, nay forward to condemn so ridiculous and unreasonable a Principle. But

Secondly, A second Excuse for Drunkenness upon the account of Pleasure, is for the Sake of the Company.

I need not spend any time in proving the Reality of this Inducement, because it is publickly own'd and pleaded as an Excuse either to Vindicate or Extenuate the Crime. Now by Company is meant either *indifferently all Persons* in general, with whom they commonly associate, or *peculiarly Strangers and Friends*, whom they see but seldom. If *indifferently all Persons* in general, with whom they commonly associate, then the Motive is this, that one Man drinks to keep another Man Company, because neither of them *have* any thing to do; or rather, because neither of them will *find* anything to do. If *peculiarly Strangers and Friends*, whom they see but seldom, then the Plea is, that they Drink together

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ther even to Excess, to be kind and civil to them, to treat them handsomely and make them welcome. And they proceed upon this Principle, *He made me Drunk when I went to see him, and therefore I must make him Drunk when he comes to see me.* This is the Sense and Meaning of that Excess, which does arise from the *Love of the Company.* The Vanity of which I shall now expose, and will do it distinctly.

First, With respect to Company in general. And were temporal Inconveniences only incur'd by Intemperance, the Force of this Argument will be but weak. Is it reasonable for a Man to drink a Glass of Poison, because a Company of mad Sparks are weary of their Lives? Shall a Man ruin his Estate and lose his Trade, because some have a mind to make all away? Shall a Man take to the Highway, and be in League with a Thievish Society, because some desperate Men fear neither God, nor the Queen, nor Law, nor Death? Company in such Cases is universally acknowledg'd to be no Reason to engage our Practice. And by the very same Reason it is vain and foolish for a Man to ruin his Health, to blast his Reputation

tion, to lose his Reason, to spend his Estate, by running into Excess for Company's sake. He that is sway'd by this Motive, argues thus with himself, *Tho' I certainly know the Fruits of Intemperance, and am sure to run upon the Evils and Inconveniences of Humane Life by it, and am sure moreover, that they either will not or cannot relieve me, when labouring under the dangerous Consequences thereof; yet out of Complaisance to the Company I am in, I am resolv'd to comply with every thing they do, and to be sway'd by their Examples, without any Regard either to Decency or Safety.* This is at first Sight so unreasonable a Plea, as needs nothing more to be said against it. The Argument carries its own Confutation. And yet this is the Sense and Reason of those, who drink to Excess for the Sake of the Company.

Besides, by express Precepts we are oblig'd not to comply with any publick Examples, in any thing, that is either sinful *in it self*, or in *Appearance*, or in its *Consequence*. For we are commanded by Mo'ses, *Not to follow a Multitude to do Evil*, Exod. xxiii. 2. By Solomon, *Not to consent, if Sinners entice us, either by their Words or Examples*, Prov. i. 10, &c. by our Saviour, *To enter in at the strait Gate*,

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Gate, and not run along with the Stream of the World, Mat. vii. 13, 14. So that we are warn'd beforehand of the Dangers of evil Company, and the Sin of complying in any thing that is Sinful, and must stand guilty of the wilful Breach of positive Commands, if we will proceed.

Nay farther, it is very unreasonable to do the same Evil that others commit, because Company is not able to give a Man any Ease, when he stands in the most *need* of Comfort. I mean at the Hour of *Death*, in the Day of *Judgment*, and the Torments of *Hell*. So far from this, that he lays Guilt in his Soul, and Disquiet in his Conscience, and is afraid to die, and makes the Thoughts of Judgment terrible, and is expos'd to future Vengeance. Alas ! What apparent Weakness is there in that Man's Conduct, who loses his Innocency and endangers his Salvation to comply with a perverse Generation? Loose Companions are but miserable Comforters to a dying Wretch. It will be but an aggravating Plea to say at the Day of Judgment, *Lord, I have a Multitude on my Side.* And those, with whom a Man sins, can never give him Comfort when he is hereafter punish'd. And oh ! What miserable Folly

is it blindly to be govern'd by the Examples of others, till we affront God, and are surpriz'd into eternal Destruction?

So that we see we cannot comply with Company in general in any Excess or Riot, without going contrary to the express Commands of Scripture, and without endangering our *Temporal* and *Eternal* Interest. And he, that will justify a Compliance so circumstantiated, gives us little Hopes of his being ever *convinc'd* or ever *reform'd*. But Company is a weak and vain Cause of Drunkenness, if we take it

Secondly, In a peculiar Sense, as it respects *Strangers* and *Friends* whom we see but seldom.

The World generally speaking, is *mistaken* in the Nature of Friendship. *Intimacy* and *Frequency* of *Conversation* is commonly call'd by that Name, when perhaps it is at the same time only a *Combination* in Sin. Thus the Proud Man thinks him a Friend, that puffs up his Self-Conceit with flattering Speeches. And the Lascivious Man thinks him his Friend, who carries on an *Intrigue* to gratifie his unlawful Lust. And the deceitful

Man thinks him his Friend, who helps him forward in his Cheats and Knaveries. And the Drunkard thinks him his Friend, who will keep him Company in his Sin, and entertains his Friend as a Friend when he betrays him to Excess. But alas! If this be Friendship, the *Devil* is the greatest Friend in the World. For he is the most zealous and forward in such kind of Offices and promoting such Designs.

But in Opposition to this, I ever thought, that a Person was no farther a Friend to another, than he promoted his real Good, either in *Effect* or *Desire*. And I must profess I shall ever be of this Opinion, till I find Reason to change it, which I can never have. And since he only is a Friend who promotes the Good, and secures the Welfare, of his Friend, and since a Man is to act in two States, Friendship must extend to the Happiness in both States, I mean with respect to his Temporal and Eternal Felicity. Friendship thus bottom'd upon Sincere and Religious Principles, does well deserve that Name. Whilst Friendship built upon Vice, is really and indeed Enmity at the Bottom, and in the End.

And

And if this be the true *Nature* of *Friendship*, I wou'd fain know how a *Riotous Entertainment* can be a *Friendly Treatment*. He can never be a Friend to a Man, who brings him to the greatest Mischief that can befall him. Did ever any Person think to befriend another, by helping him to ruin his Estate, his Credit, his Life, his Reason, and his Soul? And yet he that drinks a Man, till he be overcome, does effectually perform all these Miseries. And if this must be call'd by the Name of Love, 'tis treacherous Love. If by the Name of Kindness, 'tis horrid Kindness. If this be the Entertainment of his *Friends*, I wonder how he wou'd treat his *Enemies*.

Nay, so far is he from entertaining his Stranger or Friend in a Friendly Manner, that he does not shew him *common Civility*. And though this may have the Appearance of a Paradox, as being contrary to some vain Customs now in vogue: Yet it is built upon Reason, whereas *Custom without Reason*, how long soever practis'd, is only *Ancient Errour*. Whatever may be the Pretences of some there is in reality neither Breeding nor good Manners in such a Practice. For the

the *Attempt* of such a thing is a gross Reflection upon the Vertue of the Person: But it is much more uncivil, if the Attempt *succeeds*. Because it exposes him to the Ridicule and Laughter of the whole Company, and of all that see him. And if this must be call'd *Civility*, they are, I am afraid, no competent Judges of the Rules of Decency.

The utmost that can be said in the Vindication of the Case, is, That perhaps a Person wou'd not think himself treated in a Civil and Friendly Manner *without* it. To which I answser, That the Acquaintance of one of this Disposition ought in Point of Discretion and Religion to be *avoided*. But if his Company cannot be wholly declin'd, yet we ought to have Pity on him, if he has none on himself, at least we shou'd not prove the fatal Instruments of his Misfortunes in this kind. And this we shou'd do, as we have any Respect to his Welfare, and avoid laying the Guilt of another Man's Sin at our own Doors.

Therefore we may conclude, that that Popular Argument, which is drawn from Company or *Good Fellowship*, and which

is offer'd as a plausible Excuse for Excess, is in it self miserably weak and vain.

Thirdly, The third Excuse for Drunkenness upon the account of Pleasure, is for passing away the Time in Mirth and Jollity.

In this we have two Parts. The one is, the passing away the Time. The other is, the passing it away in Mirth and Jollity. And both, I am apt to believe, have a mighty Influence in the encouraging this Sin.

As there is no State of Life more uneasy in it self, than not to know what to do with our Time : So it is as dangerous, as it is uneasy. Because it is an usual Occasion to Sin ; and to no Sin sooner, than this of Intemperance. For it is commonly known and seen, that Persons of idle, lazy, and unactive Tempers, fall to Drinking to pass away a few Hours which stick upon their Hands, and they know not how to spend.

But to expose the Vanity of this Pretence, I desire it may be consider'd in the first place, What a mean and unworthy Reflection it is upon a Man of any tolerable Capacity to say of him, that he can find

find no other Employment but Drinking? What Pity it is, that such Powers and Perfections shou'd be bestowed, and he not know how to use and improve them. Besides, this Plea is generally as *false* as it is *mean*. Because Men not only pursue this Vice when they have *nothing* else to do, but often to the Neglect of their proper Business and Calling, in which they may find sufficient Employment, and in which they are oblig'd to be constantly industrious, as they tender their Ease, Innocency, and Happiness. But if some are placed in the World above a Calling and Trade, there are peculiar Entertainments for such, as Reading, Meditation, managing their Estates, which are no ways unbecoming the Best Nobility. And however, all Persons have a God to serve and a Soul to save, and since both these are attended with *mighty*, though not *insuperable* Difficulties, and since our Eternal State depends upon the happy Use of our Time here, who is there that can reasonably complain, for want of Business; and make that an unwarrantable Excuse to justifie Excess, as being us'd to fill up the vacant Periods of our Lives.

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The other Part of this *Excuse* for Intemperance is the passing away the Time in Mirth and Jollity. The End that is aim'd at in such a Meeting, is to Drink and be Merry. And so they might, did not they transgress the Bounds of Moderation and the Rules of Decency? But as for excessive Drinkers, I cannot imagine, wherein their Mirth consists. It can be in nothing but their Discourse. And if in that, what is it that they Discourse of, which becomes so Pleasant and Entertaining. Whatever concerns them most, is the least talk'd on there. Nothing that is either *Useful* to be consider'd or *Material* to be known, is spoken with a serious Air and sound Reason. The best that we can say of it, is, to pick out some Person to Ridicule and Censure blindly and at Random, to hold an impertinent Chat about the little Affairs of the Neighbourhood, to observe Modes and Fashions and compare how the Art and Luxury of one exceeds the Art and Luxury of another, or to make some wise Political Reflections over a News Letter, and to Sport and Jest and Laugh away one half of their time and Sleep the rest. This is the *best* that can be said of it. And I wou'd to God, it proceeded no farther. But alas! *Prophaneness*

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ness and Ribaldry do genernally mix together with their Discourse. For to Burlesque the Bible, and Abuse the Scriptures, and break a bold Jest upon Religion, and to be smoothly and handsomely Immodest, to glory in one another's Vices, and to Curse with a Grace, and Damn with Authority, are usual Subjects at such a time. A lewd Song, and a drunken Catch are taking Themes. And when a Man speaks a little Sharply and Saucily, of that which is generally reverenc'd by Persons of the best Understanding and Education, the Speech immediately passes and the grinning Crowd cries it up for Wit. But if this be the Mirth that pleases, I must join with Solomon, and say, *The Laughter of such Fools is Madness.*

S E C T.

S E C T. VIII.

*The Excuses for DRUNKENNESS upon
the Account of Benefit propos'd and
answer'd.*

THE Excuses for Drunkenness upon the Account of Benefit are principally these; the making of Bargains, the driving away Cares, the removing the Imputations of Singularity, and, the avoiding some Scoffs and Reproaches. The Weakness and Vanity of each of these I intend briefly and distinctly to expose.

The first Excuse for Drunkenness upon the Account of Benefit, is, the Making of Bargains. It is urged, as the World goes, Drinking is Necessary in the Management of Affairs, and that Business cannot be perform'd, nor Commerce carry'd on without it.

To which I give this direct Answer, That either these Bargains must be made before Men are disorder'd with Drinking, or afterwards. If before, then the Conclusion of Bargains, cannot be the Cause of Intemperance; because they are made whilst they are Sober, and being made they

they may go Sober away. If the Bargains are to be made *after* Men are disorder'd with Drinking, then I answer, *First*, That Persons in such a Condition are *Unfit* to make Bargains. Men ought to have their Wits about them, and their Reason Sound, and their Understanding Clear, when they are to do things of any Importance, either in Buying or Selling. Because otherwise they are not in a Capacity to prevent Impositions, or to determine Wisely. And some have Smarted very Severely for their Weakness and Folly herein, and repented when they have been Sober of what they did in such Cases when they were Drunk. And I answer moreover, *Secondly*, That those who will not strike Bargains with Men but when they are in Drink, may reasonably be Suspected of a Design to *Cheat* and *Over-reach* them. Because if they had no such Design they wou'd take Men with their Wits about them, and make Application to them when they are Sober. And if this be the Design, then this is still an Aggravation of the Crime. Because here is *Injustice* added to *Intemperance*, which creates a *double Guilt*. Since

Since then Correspondence may be maintain'd, and Commerce manag'd, and Business dispatch'd, with more Safety and more Honesty by Sobriety than Intemperance, it follows that the Necessity of carrying on our worldly Affairs, is a Vain, and Weak, and Unjust Pretence to be Guilty of Excess.

The Second *Excuse* for Drunkenness upon the Account of *Benefit*, is, The driving away *Cares*. Their Minds they find to be very Uneasy, and this they fly to, as a proper Remedy.

Now in this Case to give a full Answer, I must distinguish between Cares, which cause Uneasiness of Mind. There are, either such as arise from *Guilt*, or such as arise from the *World*. If such as arise from *Guilt*, then Intemperance cannot possibly be a proper Remedy for them. Company may for a time Divert, and Intemperance may for a time Stupify, the Thoughts of Man from reflecting upon his own evil Actions. But it certainly increases the Disease; and the Cries of Conscience, which are thus laid Asleep and Hush'd, will be the Louder when it Awakes, Because there is New Guilt

Guilt added to the former, which before was confess'd to be Intolerable.

But if the Uneasiness of Mind be such as arises from the *World*, it generally is, either because he is gone so far into *Debt* that he knows not how to recover, or because his *Charge* is so Great that he is not able to Maintain it, or because he has no Comfort at *Home*, and therefore is in a Manner forced to seek it Abroad. To the first Reason, I Answer, That Intemperance is not the way, either to *lessen* his *Debt*, or *satisfy* his Creditors, but rather to Encrease his *Charge* and bring his Creditors upon him. To the second Reason I answer, That his Drinking will make his Family fare the *Worse*, tho' his Sobriety cannot *wholly* Maintain them. And he ought however to Use his own Endeavours, and then cast all his Care upon God, whose Providence extendeth unto all. To the Third Reason, which arises from want of Comfort at *Home*, and is generally made and Practis'd, I Answer, That either the Fault must lie in the *Man* himself, or his *Wife* and Family. If the *Man* be in Fault thro' his ill Temper or for want of Care, and by *both* these has given occasion to Brawls and Quarrels,

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he ought in Reason to *amend*, and not pretend to quit old Scores by committing New Faults, as Drunkenness most certainly is. But if a *foward Wife*, or the Fowardness of a Family, make a Man like any Place better than his own House, yet his Absence will not mend the matter, much less his falling into excessive Drinking. For at this Rate Contentions will never have an End. And besides, 'tis a miserable Revenge, for one Person to lose his Sobriety, because another has lost her Patience,

So that let the Uneasiness of Mind arise from what it will, Intemperance is not a proper Remedy. And therefore it is a weak Pretence, to Drink to Excuses to drive away either *Guilty* or *Worldly Cares*.

The Third *Excuse* for Drunkenness upon the Account of Benefit, is to remove the Imputation of Singularity.

I confess, Singularity in indifferent Matters, as in Habit, or Gait, or Speech, and the like, is always *Ridiculous*, and generally argues *Pride*. Because it is affected to draw the Beholder's Eyes and Ears, and to be talk'd of. And to

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be *overnice* in Points, neither sinful in themselves, nor in Appearance, nor in their Consequences, is vain *Superstition*; and to dissent from Company in such Cases is Incivility and Rudeness.

But this unreasonable Singularity is not to be laid to his Charge, who will not be Drunk for Company's sake. For he can't *justly* be call'd singular. The Imputation it self is absolutely false, Because Religion has its Votaries as well as Profaneness. And a Sober Man follows the Wisest and Best of Men, who are the most Worthy of Imitation.

But admit he was Singular, or that the whole Company was resolv'd to be Drunk except himself; it is a commendable Singularity, of which he need not be ashamed. Such a constant Strictness, out of *Duty*, not *Humour*, is an Heroick Virtue. I know the World is grown so generally careleſs, that whoever is not as careleſs as they, may perhaps be call'd Precise and Formal. But if a Life, govern'd by a freddy Reason and guided by the Laws of Revelation, be Precise and Formal, 'tis great Pity that all the World is not so Formal and Precise. Alas! To be Singular in Virtue is the greatest

greatest Excellency. Because it argues a firm and unshaken Resolution. It is recorded of Lot to his immortal Honour, that he was good in so populous a Place as Sodom, when there were not ten righteous Men to be found in the City. His Quiet was disturb'd, but his Innocence not sullied. His righteous Soul was vex'd, but not debauch'd. His Company was Devilish, but his own Conversation Angelical. Though he could not make them better, yet they could not make him worse. He liv'd with them, but he liv'd against them. And this kind of Behaviour redounded to his Fame. What the Most do, is not the fittest to be done. And therefore a Multitude is neither a Rule nor Excuse. And it's highly unreasonable to run to the same Excess of Riot with other Men, only to avoid being accounted Singular. Which Imputation is in it self false. Or if true, ought to be disregarded: Singularity is not so frightful a Name nor so heavy a Burthen, but a good Conscience may support it.

The Fourth and Last Excuse for Drunkenness upon the account of Benefit, is, the avoiding some Scoffs and Reproaches.

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It has been the Fate of very good Men to have their Actions ill-construed, and their Words mis-interpreted. This was David's own Case, as we read, Psal. Ixix. 7. 10. 11. 12. *For thy Sake have I suffer'd Reproof, Shame hath cover'd my Face, I wept and chasten'd my self with Fasting, and that was turned to my Reproof, I put on Sack-cloth also and they jested upon me, They that sit in the Gate, speak against me, and the Drunkards make Songs upon me.* St. Peter told his converted Christians i Pet. iv. 3. 4. That the Gentiles, who walk'd in Lasciviousness, in Lusts, in Excess of Wine, in Revellings, in Banqueting, and abominable Idolatries, would think it strange, that you run not with them to the same Excess of Riot, speaking Evil of you. And this Consideration has prov'd a Rock of Offence to some, an Engagement to do the same Evil that others commit. But how prevailing soever this Reason has been with soft and easy Tempers, yet the Reason is but weak, and the Argument vain, For

First, Either these Scoffs and Reproaches will be express'd before your Face or behind your Back. If before your Face, your Cause is so good you will be able to defend

defend it : But I believe their Cause will be so *bad*, that they will be tempted to be silent. If *behind* your Back, it must not be amongst wise Men or good Men. Because they will think the worse of them, and the better of you, for their Contempt. Therefore if you be talk'd against for your Strictness of Living, it must be amongst Persons of loose Principles and ill Lives. Whose *Favour* as you have no Reason to expect, so you ought not to regard their *Censure*. And now, is it reasonable for a Man to ruin his Estate, to destroy his Health, to blast his Reputation, to deny his Reason, to wound his Conscience, to affront his God, to break his Laws, and to endanger his Salvation, only to avoid a bold Jest or a malicious Reproach, which a few wicked Men may throw upon him ? Will you slight the Opinions of the best and wisest of Men, and disregard the Esteem of God and Angels, only to stop the Mouths of Evil-doers, who speak disdainfully with their Lips ? Perhaps their good Words may prove your Scandal. Ought you then to do Evil to avoid their bad ones ? But let it be consider'd

Secondly, That this is no more than the best of Men have met with in all Ages. The Patriarchs and Prophets, and our Saviour and his Apostles, encounter'd the Contempt and Contradiction of Sinners. Those, that are now Saints in Heaven and sit encircled with Glory above the Clouds, were once under them, and subject to an ill-natur'd World. But Religion was not to be forc'd away by foul Aspersions. They knew there was no Shame in a good Action, no Glory in a bad one, let the Opinions of the World be what they will. And therefore they rejoic'd more in being slighted for Virtue, than applauded for Vice. To which I shall only add,

Thirdly, That such Reproaches are a Happiness. So says our Saviour, Mat. v. 11. Blessed are ye, when Men shall revile you, and say all manner of Evil against you falsely for my Sake. So says St. Pet. i Pet. iv, 14. If ye be reproach'd for the Name of Christ, happy are ye. Nay, all those, who shrink from their Obedience for fear of Reproach, are ashamed of Christ; and we know what a heavy Sentence our Blessed

Bleſſed Saviour has pronounc'd againſt ſuch as are aʃham'd of him; *Mark viii. 38.* *W^ohoſoever ſhall be aʃhamed of me, and of my Words, in this adulterous and sinful Generation, of him alſo I ſhall the Son of Man be aʃham'd, when he cometh in the Glory of his Father with the Holy Angels.*

S E C T. IX. Some proper Remedies offer'd againſt it.

Firſt. Take a ſerious View of a Person that is *Drunk*, and observe his trembling Feet, and his staring Eyes, and his faltering Tongue, and ridiculous Discouſe, and his apish Geſtures, and his fottish Temper, and his brutiſh Paſſions. And conſider farther how he becomes the Scorn of Wiſemen and Laughing-Stock of Fools, and what dangerous Evils he runs upon with reſpect to this Life and the Next, and how vain the Motives are that induce him to it. And then ſit down and lay them to Heart, and you cannot surely but receive Inſtruction, and abhor the Vice.

Secondly,

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Secondly, Be constantly industrious in your Station, and never want some honest Employment either for your Body or Mind. For the Devil tempts the busy Man, but the idle Man tempts the Devil. Therefore one of the best Remedies against it, is always to have some honest, reasonable, and useful Design to be accomplished by an industrious Application and Exercise of our Powers and Faculties.

Thirdly, Avoid the Company and Society of Drunkards. For Evil Communications usually corrupt good Manners. But if, either the Circumstances of your Life, or the Nature of your Employ, do lay a Necessity upon you sometimes to converse with such Persons, you must keep a very strict Guard, lest Example or Persuasion weaken your Resolutions and betray you by degrees into Excess. And to avoid this, observe well this Precept, Never to go to the utmost Bounds of your Strength, and what is Lawful. For if in this Case you will go as far as you may; 'tis ten to one but you go farther than you shou'd.

Fourthly,

Fourthly and Lastly, Be frequent and earnest with God in *Prayer* to strengthen your Resolutions, to arm you against the prevailing Temptations of this kind, to enable you to think of the Nature and Sin of Drunkenness, to consider the evil and dangerous Consequences thereof, and to compare the Weakness and Vanity of the Motives with them, and then pray, that he wou'd make all these Considerations *effectual* upon your Mind, by his Grace, to the Reformation of your Heart and Life. By these Rules you may *take heed unto your selves, lest at any time your Hearts be overcharged with Surfeiting and Drunkenness.*

ESSAY.

form'd say they, Be ye therefore and
serve I will God in the same to transfigure
you. **R**egeneration, to turn you assenting the
preserving Translation of this people to
suppose you to drink of the Name and
sin of Drunkenness, to consider the evil
and debauches Contendences thereof sin
to corrupte the Mespouse and Admirer of
the Mortales with them, and then say
that the world waste till th' Conqueror
comes effectually upon your Mind, by his
Grace to the Reformation of your Heart
and Life. By th' grace of God you may have
many more years before you in this time than
Heaven or earth can last. Submitting every
Drunkenness.

ESSAY III.

LUST, OR, IMPURITY.

SECT.

The various Violations of the Laws of CHASTITY.

Though the Types and Ceremonies, of the Jewish Law were to be abolished, or rather ceased of themselves, by the Coming of our Saviour and the Establishment of his Religion: Yet That, which was truly Moral was of perpetual Obligation, as being intrinsically good. In this Sense Christ made that Declaration in Matt. v. 17. *Think not that I am come to destroy the Law and the Prophets, I am not come to destroy but to fulfil.* The Ten Commandments were accordingly inserted in the Gospel, and our Saviour gave a clearer Exposition of them, and establish'd stronger

stronger Sanctions to enforce their Observance.

Amongst the rest of the Precepts of Christian Perfection, this of *Chastity* may be justly reckon'd. It seems, the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* had put this Gloss upon the Seventh Commandment, as false as it is pernicious, That if a Man did but restrain from the outward Act of Uncleanness, his *Thoughts* were *unconfin'd*. But to wipe off this Imputation and to rectifie such Mistakes, our Blessed Saviour expressly adds what was before virtually imply'd, and does teach his Disciples, that the Thoughts and Intentions of the Heart are real Adultery in the Sight of God, and that upon this account it was their indispensable Duty to set a watch over themselves, lest there shou'd be in them an evil Eye, and an evil Heart. *But I say unto you, Matt. v. 28. Whosoever looketh on a Woman to lust after her, hath committed Adultery with her already in his Heart.* Now from the Law given by *Moses* and the Improvement made by our Saviour, the following Causes must be look'd upon as certain Breaches and Violations of Both.

First,

First, *Adultery* is expressly forbidden. This is the plain Letter of the Old Law. Now Adultery is an unlawful Act committed by two Persons, where either one or both Parties are married.

In whatsoever Restriction we take it, it is a grievous Crime, as being the Violation of a positive Command, and that too of a peculiar Aggravation. If *both* Parties be *Married*, then both are guilty of *Perjury*, as well as *Adultery*: Because there is the Violation of the Marriage Vow, which was solemnly made between Man and Wife, and by which there was an inviolable Obligation to Love and Fidelity, and a strict abstaining of strange Embraces. But if only *One* of them be married, still the Imputation of *Perjury* will remain on the married Party. And on the unmarried Party there is *Injustice* as well as *Adultery*: Because it is the invading the incommutable Right and Property of a Neighbour, in that which is the most near and dear to him.

Secondly, Every Act of Uncleanness committed between two Persons *before* Marriage, is a Violation of the Laws of

of Chastity, supposing never so strict Contracts and Promises between themselves, but much more so where Marriage is neither promis'd nor design'd. For it is virtually forbidden in the old Commandment, and expressly condemn'd in other Places of Holy Writ, where we are enjoin'd more than once to fly Fornication. The main Design of St. Paul's Epistles appears to be dissuading his Christian Converts from *Fleshy Lusts*, which war against the Soul, and in which the Pagan World was so wretchedly involv'd. And though this Practice be made light of in a looſe Age, yet this will not really lessen the Heinousness of its Guilt. For that can be no light Matter, which God has forbidden us, and oblig'd us to avoid. 'Tis neither the Practice of the World, nor the Opinions of some, nor the Propensity of Nature, that can make it cease to be a Sin. Not the Practice of the World, because Right and Wrong is not determin'd by Numbers. Not the Opinions of some, because the Notions of Good and Evil are fixed. Not the Propensity of Nature, because God has provided a lawful Remedy. And if the Persons thus offending, be within the prohibited Degrees, or nearly related by Blood, 'tis *Incest* as well as *Fornication*.

Thirdly

Thirdly, All sensual Desires and Inclinations consented to, though they never break out into Act, are a Violation of this Law. For this is our Saviour's additional Improvement of the Old Precept. For he says, That *whosoever looketh on a Woman to lust after her, hath committed Adultery with her already in his Heart.* Every Beholder is not this Adulterer: But he that gazeth on the Face and Beauty of a Woman till he Lust after her, and gives his inward Consent to the Desire he has rais'd within him; he, I say, is the Adulterer our Saviour condemns. For tho' Fear, or Shame, or Want of an Opportunity, or some other Temporal Principle, keep him from the outward Act; yet he is guilty, if he only satisfies his Flesh by feeding his Eye, and acting it over in his Mind.

Indeed to consent to such Desires is sinful, because this inward Consent is the Original of outward Acts, and tends to Evil in Practice; But it is Evil in it self, as well as tends to it. For, however Humane Laws take no farther Cognizance of Mens Wickedness, than as it is demonstrated by outward Proof, because Men can see no farther. Yet God who

feeth into the Secrets of our Hearts, will judge us according to the Frame and Determination of our Thoughts.

Endeavours must be us'd absolutely to hinder all sensual Motions and Desires, which are not agreeable to Reason or Religion, from arising within us. But if these first Motions, so far as they result from pure Mechanism of Body, and the Temperament of our Blood and Spirits, be too hard to be accomplish'd; the least we can do is to receive such Thoughts with the highest *Displeasure* and cast them out with the keenest *Indignation* as soon as they arise. When such Inclinations and Thoughts do move within us, it is in our Power to be either pleas'd or displeas'd with them, to receive or reject them. And when we entertain them with Delight, and with Joy and Pleasure give them our Approbation, then and not till then they become Sinful to us. For if we receive them with Pleasure, then we consent with our Minds. And if we consent, then Lust hath conceiv'd. And when Lust hath conceiv'd, it bringeth forth Sin. We are not Sinners, because we have these Inclinations, but because we do not resist them.

What

What can be the Result of all this, but to regulate our inward Passions. There is many an Adulterous Inclination, where there is not an Adulterous Act. *For out of the Heart proceed evil Thoughts, Adulteries, Fornication, Uncleanness, and Lasciviousness.* There the Scenes are laid, and the Plots begin. And therefore we must keep our Hearts with all Diligence, for out of them are the Issues of Life. Not only the Issues of Natural Life; but the Issues of a Life Divine and Spiritual.

Fourthly, Such Discourses, as rudely transgress the Bounds of Modesty and cannot be heard without a Blush, are a Violation of the Laws of Chastity. Did we only consider the Rudeness and Indecency of such Talk, and what a gross Reflection it is upon the Virtue of our Auditors to think that they should be pleased with it, methinks we shou'd find an Engagement to take heed that we offend not in this kind with our Tongue. But there is Guilt join'd with the Indecency, and 'tis a Sin as well as Rudeness, and therefore stricter Obligations we have to tie up our Tongues in Silence. St. Paul charges Ephes. iv. 29. and Chap. v. 3, 4. Let no corrupt Communication proceed out of

your Mouths; Fornication, and all Uncleanness, let it not be once named amongst you, as becometh Saints: Neither Filthiness, nor foolish Talking, nor Festing, which are not convenient. And our Saviour declares, Matt. xii. 37. By thy Words thou shalt be justified, and by thy Words thou shalt be condemn'd. Such Persons therefore, who make a common Practice of Lewd Discourse, wou'd do well to consider this Prohibition of the Apostle's, and this Conclusion of our Saviour's. For then they will perceive what Guilt they heap upon themselves by such corrupt Communications.

Besides, However some may flatter themselves with an Opinion, that the Liberty of the Speech is indulg'd; yet they are widely mistaken when they extend it to such a Case. An Account must be given of our Words, and a great deal of Sin is contracted by them? 'Tis impossible to separate Wanton Thoughts from Lewd Discourses. For *out of the Abundance of the Heart, the Mouth speaketh.* Words are only the Expressions of the Mind, and there must be Notions answerable to the Speech, and therefore there must be impure Notions which create the Guilt. But obscene Speeches do

do not only proceed from a vitiated Mind, but also raise impure Thoughts and excite Lust in others; and so we are answerable for all the Evil and Mischiefs that follow from hence.

Nay, Though a Man does not speak lewdly himself, yet if he makes Lewd *Constructions* of other Peoples Words, he is in a manner equally guilty. 'Tis strange to observe, that a Man cannot speak an innocent Sentence, but it shall be presently interpreted in a wanton Sense. But alas! This at once discovers the Filthiness of their own Apprehensions and Inclinations, and rudely wrests the Speaker's Meaning.

One of the greatest Causes of Lewdness, is obscene Talk. And we may cease to wonder that the Age is so Lewd, when we consider how intemperately this is indulg'd. It is now become the Sauce of Conversation, and there is scarce any Company, where we do not meet, either with loose Discourse, or loose Constructions. Some indeed can speak a little more smoothly and ingeniously. But by little Hints we may come to the Intentions of the Heart. I wou'd to God such Persons wou'd consider

der the Guilt they contract hereby to themselves, the Sin they occasion in others. No one can imagine but those Expressions must very much unbecome the Mouth of a *Christian*, which are enough to violate the Ear of an honest *Pagan*.

Fifthly, All *Inducements* to Uncleanness and *Occasions* of it, are Breaches and Violations of the Laws of Chastity. For where there is an Obligation to an End, there is an Obligation to the Means which are necessary to that End. And seeing Adultery, with all other Acts of Uncleanness, are forbidden, the Causes of them are of course forbidden also.

In this case, great Care must be taken, that we do not give our Corporeal Humours an Unnatural Predominancy by pampering our Bodies, or too high Feeding. For this is making *Provision for the Flesh*, and is a Temptation to fulfil the *Lusts thereof*. Temperance is the best Preserver of Chastity; and the Unclean Spirit is to be weaken'd and storm'd by Fasting; when our Tables become Snares to us, Rioting and Drunkenness make way for Chambering and Wantonness.

When

When we have accustom'd our selves to so strict a Temperance, as to enable us to bring under our Bodies, then it will be useful for us to prevent the Hearing or Reading loose Songs, Plays, Novels, and Romances. Because the sad Experience of some will tell us, that they are great Corrupters of Youth, and administer Fuel and other Incentives to Youthful Lusts, and vitiate their Palates so much, that they have a Disgust to any thing that is Pure, and especially to *the sincere Milk of the Word*. For when they give an Account of the Beginning of their Debauchery, they are pleased to say, That they were first enter'd at the Play-House, from thence to the Tavern, and then to the Stews.

Nay farther, We must watch over our outward Senſes and make a Covenant with our Eyes: Because they are the Casements, through which Lust usually enters. Lewd Company must be shunn'd and avoided: Because either their Discourses or their Examples are, like an infectious Air, apt to corrupt and debauch. Idleness must be expell'd by Industry: Because when we have got nothing to do, the Devil and our own Lusts will

find us some Work: And this was the Occasion of Sodom's Uncleanness and David's Adultery. Earnest and constant Prayer must be used: Because by that we receive Strength to oppose the corrupt Powers of our Bodies and vile Affections.

Sixthly, All Unnatural Lusts are certain Violations of the Laws of Chastity. For when the Men, leaving the Natural Use of the Woman, dis honour their own Bodies between themselves, and burn in their Lust one towards another, Men with Men, working that which is unseemly; and when the Women give themselves up unto vile Affections, and change the Natural Use into that which is against Nature, Rom. i. they are guilty of one of the highest Crimes they are capable of committing and falling into. Such vile Affections are, what Nature abherrs, what Revelation forbids, what the Apostle condemns, what the most Brutish Heathens only practis'd, what were punish'd with Temporal Death under the Law, what are threaten'd with Eternal Damnation under the Gospel, what are justly abominable in the Sight of God and Man, and what were so severely

severly punish'd in that Vengeance which fell upon Sodom.

In short, *Impurity* in general, whether *Discursive*, *Contemplative*, or *Practical*, *Natural* or *Unnatural*, a *Christian* is neither to allow nor encourage. But he must *crucifie his Flesh* and *mortifie the Deeds of the Body*, and bring his Bodily Appetites under the Dominion of Reason, and govern his Corporeal Humours and Passions by Decency and Virtue, and neither Lust after an *Unlawful Object*, nor Sin by an *Immoderate Gratification*, even when the Object is *Lawful*. They that are Christ's must abstain from the Works of the Flesh. *And the Works of the Flesh are manifest, which are these, Adultery, Fornication, Uncleanness, Lasciviousness, and Revellings, and such like.*

S E C T.

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Sixtly, All Unnatural Lusts are certain Violations of the Laws of Chastity. For when the Men, leaving the Natural Use of the Woman, dishonour their own Bodies between themselves, and burn in their Lust one towards another, Men with Men, working that which is unseemly; and when the Women give themselves up unto vile Affections, and change the Natural Use into that which is against Nature, Rom. i. they are guilty of one of the highest Crimes they are capable of committing and falling into. Such vile Affections are, what Nature abhors, what Revelation forbids, what the Apostle condemns, what the most Brutish Heathens only practis'd, what were punish'd with Temporal Death under the Law, what are threaten'd with Eternal Damnation under the Gospel, what are justly abominable in the Sight of God and Man, and what were so severely

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S E C T.

S E C T. II.

The Danger of Sinful Indulgences in these Kinds.

I Shall here consider, what Dangers may be expected from God whom we dishonour, some peculiar Dangers to the Persons whom we may injure, and other Dangers in general to our selves who are the principal Offenders.

First, What Dangers may be expected from God whom we dishonour.

Him that honoureth God, will God honour. And him that dishonoureth God, will God destroy. It is a fearful thing to fall Guilty into the Hands of the Living God. Now this will be the Condition of all such Offenders; And nothing but a speedy and sincere Repentance can prevent the avenging Stroke.

It is plain that by Impurity we affront God the Father. Because we cast his Words behind us, and trample under Foot those Laws, which ought to be kept for ever Inviolable and Sacred. And what

what can we wait for but a fearful Judgment, as he is a Wise and Just Governour of the World.

It is a dishonouring God the Son, whose Members we are. And this Argument the Apostle makes use of to dissuade us from such Practices. i Cor. vi. 15. *Know ye not, that your Bodies are the Members of Christ? Shall I then take the Members of Christ, and make them the Members of an Harlot? God forbid.*

It is also a dishonouring of the *Holy Ghost*. And so the same Apostle immediately after the aforescited Place, uses this Argument, as effectual to dissuade Men from Fornication. Vers. 19. *What, know ye not that your Body is the Temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you.* So that by defiling our Bodies, we defile the Temple of the Spirit of God, whose Office it is to purifie our Bodies. And when we resist the Motions of the *Holy Ghost*, and yield to those of a contrary Spirit, we force the Spirit of God to retire.

Since then Impurity is so heinous an Offence against the whole Sacred Trinity, what Judgments may not be dreaded from

from a Knowing, a Just, a Holy, and Omnipotent God. We may guess what Threatnings hang over our Heads from *Heaven* for such Impieties, by the Examples of others who are recorded in *Scripture*, as standing Monuments of the Divine Displeasure against the People of such Abominations. The severest Judgement, that ever befel any Place, even Fire and Brimstone upon *Sodom* was for this Sin of Uncleanness. And the *Israelites* committed Fornication, and for this Crime there fell in one Day three and twenty Thousand. And who that goes on in the same Way, can promise himself Impunity. These are Dangers, which all such Persons in general may reasonably fear and expect.

Here then let *Joseph's Example* in Gen. xxxix. be set before our Eyes, as an admirable Instance of perfect Purity, and for his Principle that mov'd him to it. Certainly never was any Man's Chastity more violently, more closely attack'd than his was. The Temptation came from his *Mistress*: But neither the *Hopes* of her Interest, nor the *Fear* of her Authority cou'd engage him to a Compliance. The Temptation was repeated, *Day by Day* she spake unto him: But still

still he hearken'd not unto her, to lye by her, or to be with her, his Patience was not wearied nor his Vertue shaken. His Master was gone from Home, and none of the Men of the House were within, so that he might have committed the Crime with all imaginable Secrecy, without the Fear of Discovery: Yet none of these things mov'd him. The Fear of God in his Heart maintain'd an ascending Influence over his Actions and restrain'd him from so vile an Act, *How can I do this great Wickedness and Sin against God?* Joseph no doubt thought, that if he had comply'd with the Temptations of his Mistress, he shou'd injure his Master, betray his Trust, blast his Reputation, lose his Friend, and ruin himself in a Country whither he was lately Sold, and where he was perfectly a Stranger: But still the *Dishonour*, which his *Adulterous Act* wou'd throw upon God, was the chief Object of his Mind, and kept him from so filthy and so abominable a Deed. He said not, *How can I do this Wickedness and Sin against my Master*, nor, *How can I do this Wickedness and ruin my self?* No, his Chastity had not so mean a Foundation, but his Motive was more Excellent and Divine, *How, says he, can I do this great Wickedness and Sin against God?* And let every

every one from his Example hear and learn Instruction, think and act after the same manner.

Secondly, Impurity is dangerous with respect to the Persons whom we may injure. If the Person, who is intic'd and prevail'd upon, be Single, she has lost her Credit and Reputation for ever. Shame and Dishonour will attend her, that will never be done away. For though by Repentance and Sinning no more she may be restor'd to the Divine Favour; yet the Malice of Men will be sure to take care to bury it neither in Silence nor Oblivion. What God is willing to forgive, the World will be unwilling to forget; and this is her Condition, in case she does repent.

But it may be she never may repent. Nay, perhaps she may add *Murder* to *Lust*, and to prevent the fearful Load of guilty Shame, may either destroy her Conception in the Womb, or dispatch the Infant as soon as it is Born. And then if she be provok'd to commit such Crimes as these, if she be put into a Course of Sinning from which she may never turn, it is the *Damning* of her Soul eternally: Which is the highest Punishment,

nishment, that God can either threaten or inflict.

If the Person, who is intie'd and prevail'd upon, be in a State of *Marriage*, then, besides those Dangers which I have just now mention'd in the former Case, innumerable Inconveniences will ensue, which will be difficult to be sustain'd. At least with any tolerable Ease. It deprives her of that Conjugal Affection, which ought to be between Husband and Wife. It robs her of that Love and Fidelity, to which she was so solemnly oblig'd. It gives Occasion, and just Occasion, for that Passion of Jealousy, which is truly call'd the Rage of a Man and destroys the Comforts of such a Life. And it brings an Unlawful Issue into a Family: And when I have mention'd these things, I need to add no more. These are Misfortunes which none but the Miseries of the Damn'd can either equal or exceed. Such a State is a *Hell* upon *Earth*, and generally leads to a *Hell* beyond it. There are some other Natural Fruits of this Vice, which attend all such Persons in common, and will be consider'd by shewing

Thirdly,

Thirdly, That Impurity is dangerous with respect to our selves, who are the principal Offenders.

In the first Place, It is injurious to Health, as being a Sin directly against the Body. For, as the Apostle argues, i Cor. vi. 18. Other Sins, that Man doeth, are without the Body: But he that committeth Fornication, sinneth against his own Body. Solomon says, that a Man goes after this Vice, as an Ox goeth to the Slaughter, or as a Fool to the Correction of the Stocks, till a Dart strike through his Liver, as a Bird hasteth to the Snare, and knoweth not that it is for his Life. And so he is brought to mourn at the last, when his Flesh and his Body are consum'd. Early Debawchery dashes the Sprightliness of Youth, antedates the Miseries of Old Age, and sometimes prevents the Stench and Corruption of the Grave. Many strong Men have been wounded and slain by their own Lusts, and died Martyrs in the Devil's Cause. Their Bodies have rotted to such a Degree, that they have been abhor'd and avoided, even before they have been Dead.

Again, It is prejudicial to Reputation. For whatever other Excellencies a Person may be endow'd with, by this he will get a Wound and Dishonour, which will remain as a Scar to Posterity. There is a wonderful Sagacity in some in finding out Faults, and there are generally good Memories to retain them. Many Graces and much Time are requisite to acquire a good Name; but one such Vice in a Moment is enough to lose it for ever.

And again, it ruins a Man's Estate. Because it brings the Curse of God upon his Labours. And because the Feastings and Revellings, the Gifts and Rewards, which do usually attend it, are great and will consume his Substance. It is therefore given in Scripture as good Advice, Prov. v. 8, 9, 10. *My Son, remove thy Way from a strange Woman, and come not nigh the Door of her House, lest Strangers be filled with thy Wealth, and thy Labours be in the House of a Stranger.* For Prov. vi. 26. *By means of a Whorish Woman, A Man is brought to a Piece of Bread.* This Vice preys upon the Maintenance, and extends to the Ruin of whole Families. The Bread, the Inheritance of an

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innocent Legal Off-spring is hereby consumed.

Lastly, Impurity is dangerous, as it tends to the Ruin of the Soul for ever. For Marriage is honourable in all, and the Bed undefil'd, but Whoremongers and Adulterers. God will judge, Heb. xiii. 4. But the pronounced Sentence after they are brought to Judgment, will be most fatal, reaching to an utter Exclusion from the Kingdom of Heaven, and the positive Punishment of Eternal Destruction. The Apostle thus determines the first Part of their unhappy Condition, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. *Be not deceiv'd, neither Fornicators, nor Adulterers, nor Effeminate, nor Abusers of themselves with Mankind, shall inherit the Kingdom of God.* And Ephes. v. 5. *This ye know, that no Whoremonger, nor unclean Person, hath any Inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and of God.* St. John is express as to the positive Punishment, Rev. xxi. 8. Where we read, *Whoremongers shall have their Part in that Lake which burneth with Fire and Brimstone.*

What St. Paul says of Fornication, may be as truly said of all kinds of Impurity, and of Luxury and Excess, and any

any other Crime which has its chief Original from the Body. Because they, who do such things, directly sin against their own Bodies. Not only against the Strength, Ease, and Happiness of them in this Life, but against the Hope and Expectation of a Glorious Resurrection at the Last Day. By these our Health is impair'd at present, and a happy Immortality undermin'd hereafter.

How can a Glorious Resurrection be expected, so long as the Unlawful Embraces of Fornication and Adultery are indulged. For these Indulgences God swept away by an amazing Judgment three and twenty Thousand of the *Israelites* in one Day, and even now many die Martyrs in such a Cause. And what can they meet with, when they rise from the Dead, but to have both Body and Soul cast into Everlasting Torments.

How can a Glorious Resurrection be expected, so long as Men and Women dishonour their Bodies, contrary to the Ends and Inclinations of Nature? And since this Abomination, which carries an Affront to Humane Nature it self, was the Sin of *Sodom*, and remarkably, severely punish'd with Fire and

Brimstone immediately from *Heaven*, what can such Persons reasonably inherit, when they rise from the Dead, but to change the Flames of this world of Lusts for the hottest Flames of *Hell*.

Think of these things, O ye Transgressors, and shew your selves *Men*, shew your selves *Christians*. Our Bodies are the Members of *Christ*, and appointed for Immortality. Accordingly let us pay them a mighty Reverence, by a watchful Temperance and a rigid Chastity. And then, when the Sounding Trumpet shall shake the trembling Ground, when the Sepulchers shall quicken, and the startled Dead awake, we shall with Joy meet our new reviv'd Bodies, and be made Partakers of a Glorious Resurrection to the Life Everlasting, through *Jesus Christ* our Lord.

SECT.

S E C T. III.

The Folly of wilful IMPURITY.

THE Scripture usually mentions this Vice under this Name. For it is call'd *Folly*, in Gen. xxxiv, 7, and ii Sam. xiii, 12. And this, not only as a more modest Name for the Sin, but as being in Reality such. The young Wanton, which Solomon beheld through his Casement, going through the Street to the Harlot's House, is said to be a *Young Man void of Understanding*. And indeed this Scripture Character will be found not to be unjustly given, when we have consider'd, how it proceeds from Ignorance.

The Wisdom or Folly of Man, is to be seen in the Conduct of his Life. By this we judge of his Weakness or Discretion. Now if the Conduct of this debauch'd Person be not guided by Rational Principles, then the Government of his Life is weak. And that it is not so guided, I urge two Principles against him, which may be clearly proved.

The first is, That there is no *Proportion* between the *Pleasure* of the Vice, and

the *Inconvenience* that do attend and follow it. The Pleasure is short and momentary; the Inconveniences durable and lasting. The Pleasure is Corporeal and Brutish; the Inconveniences reach to the Body and Mind, Estate and Reputation. The Pleasure is only in this Life, and then only when the Body is strong; but the Inconveniences attend both Health and Sickness, and pursue the Man even beyond the Grave.

Where then lies the Wisdom of his Conduct, who chuses such a Course of Life, as robs him of a far greater Pleasure than it brings? Can he be call'd *Wise*, who suffers himself to be blindly hurry'd on by an impetuous and unruly Appetite? Is he a prudent Man, who is resolv'd to satisfie a Bestial Desire, whatever it cost him in this Life and the Next? And yet this is the Case of our Debauchee. His Sin is very heinous before God, and destroys the Strength of his Body and Mind, and is follow'd with Shame and Poverty, and will bring his Body and Soul to Eternal Destruction: And yet, *Fool as he is*, he still goes on to gratifie his Lust, and tamely submits to the Virulence of his Corporeal Humours. Though perhaps he has found himself deceiv'd

deceiv'd and disappointed, and his Expectation went beyond his Fruition, as I believe all Sinners actually do: Yet when the Tide of Bodily Desires return with fresh Vigour, excited and inflamed, his heated Imagination transports him to enchanted Castles of Delight and Pleasure, and his former Experience does not overbalance the present Temptation. What can be said of such a Person, but that he is short-sighted, and does not see afar off into the Consequences of things. If he did, his Conduct wou'd be otherwise than it is. But since this is his Conduct, the Conclusion is plain, that it proceeds from Ignorance.

The other Principle which exposes the Ignorance and Folly of such a Person, is this, That he may take the same Pleasure if he will, and at the same time avoid those Inconveniences.

God has planted in us several Inclinations which we are oblig'd to confine within the Bounds of Reason and Restraints of Religion, and Virtue consists in the due Government of them. And we ought in the present Case either to subdue them, or to satisfie them in a Lawful Way and Moderate Degree.

Where the entire Subjection cannot be accomplish'd, God has allow'd a Satisfaction. Only He Himself has prescrib'd the Limitations of the same; which Limitations, as they secure our Innocency, so they give us the highest Gust of Sensual Pleasures, and by consequence the interest of both Worlds are safely preserv'd.

These things being consider'd, how is it possible, that that Man shou'd avoid the Imputation of Folly, who, when he may satisfie his Desires in a Lawful Way, and obtain the Favour of God and the Happiness both of *Heaven* and *Earth*, chuses to satisfie them in an Unlawful Way, incurs the Displeasure of God, and forfeits his Innocency and Happiness. That, and that only is Pleasure, which a Man can reflect on with Delight and Satisfaction, and which is not attended with Guilt and Fear. Whereas Guilt and Fear and Regret of Mind, are indeed inseparable from Unlawful Gratifications.

As Impurity is Folly, because it *proceeds* from Ignorance: So it is Folly, because it *causes* Ignorance. It may in reason be expected that it shou'd be so, and it is found from Experience that it is so.

so. Weakness of Mind is the Effect of this Sin, as well as Shortness of Sight the Cause. The more a Man indulges his Appetite in Sensual Pleasures, he grows the more divided in his Thoughts, and obscures the Clearness, and sometimes destroys the very Power of Perception; to be sure he quite perverts the Stability of his Judgment. Lust darkens the Understanding and estranges the Heart from God. He cannot judge of Natural Truths, much less of Truths, which are of a Spiritual Concern, and relate to Religion. Because the Body is not in a fit Disposition to assist the Operations of the Mind. For the Passions are rais'd, and the Humours are disturb'd, and the Spirits are weak. And Confusion and Obscurity must from hence follow of course. Was not this the Effect, we can give no Account of some irregular Practices and absurd Reasonings, of which they are notoriously guilty.

SECT.

S E C T. IV.

*A Brief Summary of the Signs and Rules of
CHASTITY.*

First, To avoid impure Thoughts, so far, as neither voluntarily to raise them; nor encourage and be pleas'd with them, when they are rais'd against our Wills. *Matt. v. vers. 8. 28. ii Cor. 7. 1.*

Secondly, To decline all such Discourses, Expressions, and Jests, as certainly proceed from a pleas'd and vicious Imagination, and are design'd to inflame impure Ideas in our selves, and raise them in others. *Ephes. iv. 29. Ephes. v. 3, 4.*

Thirdly, Not to consent to any Natural Actual Pollution, neither with a Married Person nor a Single Person; *Exod. xx. 14. i Cor. vi. 15. i Thess. iv. 3, 4, 5.* Not to consent to any Unnatural Actual Pollution, neither by our selves, nor with others; *Lev. xviii. 22, 23. Rom. i. 26. 27. i Cor. vi. 9, 10.*

Fourthly, To resist and avoid all the Occasions which we may judge or experience, to lead to Uncleanness. And to be

be willing to know, and ready to practise all the Means, which Nature and Religion may prescribe for the living a Chaste and Virtuous Life.

The MEANS are these:

First, A strict Temperance, not only as to the Quantity, but the Quality of our Meat and Drink.

Secondly, Great Care in Hearing or Reading Songs, Plays, and Romances.

Thirdly, The making a Covenant with our Eyes, lest they gaze to our Ruin.

Fourthly, Avoid Idleness; And if any impure Fancy arises, do not argue against it, but turn your Thoughts as much as possible upon some other Subject, and go into some Company which may divert it by their Discourse.

Fifthly, Constantly shun all Lewd Company, and keep a double Guard when unavoidably engaged in it, and stay no longer than Necessity requires.

Sixthly, Pray frequently and earnestly to God. SECT.

be willing to know the true reason of his
S E C T. V. give all the Nature and
Religion may provide for the living
*The Nature and Success of a Christian
GOVERNMENT of our Bodily Inclina-
tions.*

IT is necessary to determine, what is meant by this Christian Government, because without such a Determination we shall proceed in the Dark, and be perplex'd with perpetual Scruples and Doubts whether we have attain'd it or no.

Now by Government is not meant, such an Absolute Power over our Bodies or Minds, as to be wholly freed from the first Motions and Inclinations. This we must not expect to be wrought within us; because this wou'd be to un-make us. Besides, these first Motions and Inclinations either in Body or Mind are not Sinful, now under the Gospel. Because they are Natural, Involuntary, and Un-avoidable, and found in the Best and most Regenerate Christians.

But by Government is meant, Such a Power over our Minds, as to be kept from consenting to, or being pleas'd with

with Lustful Thoughts; and, *such* a Power over the Humours of our Bodies as to be preserv'd from Actual Pollution. And both by due Care may in a great measure be maintain'd by the Observation of the Natural and Religious Means before prescrib'd.

To this end I shall lay down, Some Rules and Directions to be observ'd in the Use of the Natural and Religious Means of Chastity, and then consider the Efficacy and Success of them.

The Rules and Directions are these Two. *First*, A Person must sincerely desire to be deliver'd from this Vice. For if he loves the Vice and resolves to keep it, either he will neglect the Means, or practise them by halves, and so by consequence deceive himself and dissemble with God. And no Wonder that he continues under the Dominion of his Lusts. *Secondly*, He must be sincere and constant in the Use both of Natural and Religious Means. That is, He must observe a strict Temperance, keep a watchful Care over the first Motions and other Occasions, and be constant, and earnest in a particular Prayer against this Sin. These he must use, not only when the Temptation

Temptation is upon him, but at all other Times, even in the most serene and cool Temper both of Body and Mind. Nay, a Christian must observe these Rules, though he never had experienc'd any Temptations of this kind.

As to the *Efficacy* and *Success* of these *Rules and Means*, they become so by way of *Prevention* and by way of *Remedy*. By way of *Prevention in Good Persons*. By way of *Remedy in the Bad*.

In the Case of *Prevention* I wou'd have the Reader to understand, 'tis not only my Advice, but I look upon it as an absolute Duty, for every *Christian* to apply himself to the Use of these Means, as soon as ever he arrives to that Maturity, as to feel these Inclinations begin to stir within him, if he does not use them before he arrives at those Years. Because beginning with our Bodies thus soon, we the easier attain to a *Christian Government*, and prevent a great deal of Trouble and Guilt, which by the Neglect wou'd certainly ensue. For one indulged Thought, one Voluntary Actual Pollution, involves the Soul in Guilt, and gives the Body a strange Dominion over our Reason, as the sad Experience of some

some can tell us. Whereas a strict Temperance, a watchful Eye against the Occasions of Falling, and constant Prayers for Chastity, have weaken'd the corrupt Powers of their Bodies, and strengthen'd the spiritual Powers of their Souls. There are abundance of Persons, whose Inclinations wou'd have led them to this Vice, and who yet in a great measure have maintain'd their Post by the Use of these Means. The Truth of which they can attest from this Reason. Because, whenever they have been in Danger of Falling, or sometimes have *actually* fallen through the Heat and Surprise of Lust, upon Inquiry into the Cause, it has been owing to Want of Care and Decay of Piety.

In short, the most Chaste, the most Modest, and the most Vertuous Christian, is oblig'd from the Beginning to observe these Rules and Means of Purity. Because at his Baptism he listed himself under Christ's Banner to fight against the World, the Flesh, and the Devil. And as he is to struggle with this Body of Flesh so long as he lives, as being a dangerous, close, and importunate Enemy: So he knows not how soon it may begin to rebell, and therefore let him be early in

in arming himself and preparing for the Battle. This is the Advice I give to the *Vertuous Youth* by way of *Prevention*. And the Efficacy and Success abundance of *Christians* can testify.

But what shall I urge by way of *Remedy*? What shall I say to those, whose Inclinations are naturally very strong? Or to those, who by a frequent Habit of Thought, or by frequent Actual Pollution have hitherto cherish'd this Vice? Shall I say they are unavoidably irrecoverable ? I will not, cannot say this. The Recovery indeed will be the more difficult, in Proportion to these contracted Habits. But provided they sincerely desire to live a chaste Life, and are willing to observe those Rules which are in their Power to perform, in time I dare promise such a Success as shall be accepted of by God. Now to such Persons I prescribe

First, A hearty *Repentance* for the time past, and a sincere *Resolution* against the Vice for time to come. If they can truly say, *I confess my Wickedness*, and am grieved at my very Soul for my Sin. If they can truly say, *I have sworn and am stedfastly purpos'd to keep God's Righteous Judgments*.

Judgments If they can truly say and resolve this before God, I doubt not but God's Mercy will pardon the past Guilt; I doubt not but his Goodness will remove or ease those Punishments which have Naturally or Providentially follow'd Indulgences of this kind; and I doubt not but his Grace will deliver them from the Dominion of such Vices for the time to come. This is what I prescribe with respect to *past Guilt*, and without such a Repentance, such a Resolution, it will be in vain to proceed. Now I hope all Persons will allow, that it is in our Power to be heartily griev'd for what we have done amiss, and to resolve to do so no more. After this I prescribe to such Persons

Secondly, The sincere and constant Use of the abovenamed Means, which are certainly in our Power to perform. 'Tis certainly in our Power to avoid Gluttony in Eating, and Excess in Drinking. 'Tis certainly in our Power to avoid those Meats and those Drinks, which we may know or experience to provoke more directly to this Vice. 'Tis certainly in our Power to avoid Idleness, ill Company, Talking Lewdly, and raising Lascivious Thoughts. And 'tis certainly in our

Power to put up a peculiar Prayer against this Sin twice every Day at the least. Now after the Exercise of such a Repentance and the Use of these Means, both which are in our Power, I prescribe to such Persons and tell them.

Thirdly, What will be the Efficacy and Success of them.

Now we must not expect such a Success, as to be as *Perfect* in the Virtue of Chastity, as we are in any other Virtue, which is more agreeable to our Inclinations. For if Lust be the Sin of our Temper and Constitution, if we have moreover been frequently and heinously Guilty herein, it is sufficient, if the Use of these Means and all our Strugglings keep us *barely* from Sinning. To be wholly freed from the Temptation, and to be as *Perfect* in that Virtue as any other, must not be expected after all our Pains.

Neither must it be expected, That the Success, which the Use of these Means is able to perform, will be accomplish'd in a *speedy* Manner. Because there is nothing more difficult than to break off a Habit, especially such a Habit as this.

Time

Time and Patience, and Constancy must be allow'd. We must not grow Weary in our Pursuit and Endeavours, tho' we do not meet with an immediate Victory. For we shall prevail so far as to be within the Reach of the Gospel Mercy, if we Faint not.

But although we are not to expect the Use of these Means to be efficacious in a *speedy* and *perfect* Manner: Yet upon the sincere and constant Practice of these Means there will be this immediate Success, That the Guilt of being overcome by a close and violent Temptation will be really Lessen'd and the more readily Pardon'd by God upon our Repentance. And provided after this Fall and this Repentance, we renew our Resolutions and still continue the same Means, we shall assuredly find the Power of this Sin by Degrees strangely to abate. If God sees that we truly endeavour to obey his Laws in this Particular, and Contribute all we can to such an Obedience, and are heartily grieved that we cannot Obey them more Perfectly, we may rest Satisfied, that we shall be delivered from the reigning Power and Dominion of it, and that other involuntary remaining In-

firmities will never be imputed to us to our Condemnation in the other World. St. Paul gives an Instance of such a Success in *himself* and the *Corinthians*.

As to *himself* that is set down, in the ii Cor. xii. 7, 8, 9. In the seventh Verse he tells his Temptation, *And least I shou'd be exalted above Measure thro' the Abundance of Revelations, there was given to me a Thorn in the Flesh, the Messenger of Satan to buffet me.* In the eighth Verse he tells us the Course he took to be Deliver'd from this Temptation, *For this thing I besought the Lord thrice that it might depart from me.* And in the ninth Verse he tells the Success of this Course, *And the Lord said unto me, my Grace is sufficient for thee, for my Strength is made perfect in Weakness.* The same Apostle in another Place declares another Course he took with his Body, which has respect to Mortification, i Cor. ix. 27. *But I keep under my Body and bring it into Subjection, least that by any Means when I have Preached to others, I my self should be a Cast-away.* And he recommends the same Course to us by that Precept of his, Rom. xiii. 14. *Make no Provision for the Flesh to fulfil the Lusts thereof*

thereof. By Prayer and Mortification St. Paul prevail'd against this Temptation. And so shall we, if we be sincere and constant in the Use of the Means. Take away Fuel, and the Fire will go out. A Lamp can burn no longer, than it is Supplied with Oil.

The other Instance he mentions is concerning the *Corinthians*, and is set down in the i Cor. vi. 9, 10, 11. In the ninth and tenth Verses he declares, that *neither Fornicators, nor Adulterers, nor Effeminate, nor Abusers of themselves with Mankind, shall inherit the Kingdom of God.* And in the eleventh Verse he tells the *Corinthians* that they had been Guilty of such Vices, *And such were some of you.* But he tells them withal that they were deliver'd from the Dominion of such Vices, *And such were some of you, but ye are Washed, but ye are Sanctify'd, but ye are Justify'd.* And he moreover tells them that this Victory was obtain'd by the Gospel Principles, *But ye are Washed, but ye are Sanctify'd, but ye are Justify'd, in the Name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.*

So that if we will submit to Reason, if we will submit to Experience, not

only the Experience of St. Paul, not only the Experience of the Corinthians, but the Experience of Thousands of Christians at this Day, we may conclude, that if the Good have a real Desire to prevent, and the Bad a real Desire to overcome, their bodily Inclinations, the only way to do it is by a strict Temperance, a watchful Care, and a constant Piety. Let them follow these Rules, not only when they have a Temptation, but when they have none, and I may promise they will so far succeed, as to be Innocent in a Christian Sense. Nay, I dare say those very Persons, who have been apt to think and say, God has put us under such Laws as are impossible to be kept, have never constantly and to the utmost try'd the Efficacy of these Means. Instead of this perhaps, they have encourag'd this Vice, and run up on all the Occasions and Temptations to it. And if so, let them take Care not to charge God foolishly. For in this Case the Difficulty of Obedience, is not to be ascrib'd to God's Laws, but to their own Neglect and Indulgences.

By the Use of these Means and Remedies, which every Christian is oblig'd to pursue, a Man may Maintain the Government

vernment over his Body. But if these prove ineffectual, he may be satisfy'd, God has design'd that he shou'd change his life, and alter his Condition. Marriage becomes an indispensable Duty to him, that cannot live Innocently without it; And he gives the Devil an exceeding Advantage against him by refusing to comply. Here then the Apostle's Advice must take Place, i Cor. vii. 2, 9. *Let every Man have his own Wife, and let every Woman have her own Husband. For it is better to Marry, than to Burn.*

P 4 ESSAY

ESSAY IV.

SWEARING.

SECT. I.

The Introduction, and a Remark upon our Saviour's Words, Swear not at all, &c.

THE great Design of the whole Creation was to glorify the Name of the Creator and Celebrate the Maker Praise. And every Part of this visible World truly Answers this great Design, except degenerate Man. Humane Race is arrived to such a Height of Prophaness, and to so little Consideration of the greatness and infinite Perfection of that supreme Being, as not to be in the least afraid of offering an Affront unto him, nor dread to Blaspheme his sacred Name.

And

And here give me Leave to take up a Lamentation, especially in an Age, which seems to bid Defiance to that August Name which it would preserve inviolate. Many, too many, do we find from the Oldest to the Youngest calling God to witness in the most trivial and impudent Affairs, as if our Lips were our own and we had no Superior to control us, as if we were made to reproach and dishonour our Maker, and to despise and neglect all Reverential Thoughts of God, and Regard to his Laws. Let the *least* Question be made of any thing, and an Oath shall presently be brought to confirm it. Nay, so intemperately have the Tongues of Men been indulged this way, that God must be call'd to witness, even where there is no Question at all to be made of any thing, nor it may be likely to be, unless it be whether the Party be a brave resolute Sinner, and hath as little Fear of God as Man. For what other Interpretation can any Man make of such Mens Swearing, but that they are afraid of being thought Religious, or rather of not being thought to bid Defiance to it.

This is too great a Truth, and cannot be too much lamented. God grant, that
as

as the *Land* hath mourned because of Swearing ; so it may mourn for it, and we propitiate that Name by our Humiliation and Reverence, which others and our selves hitherto have so often dishonour'd and blasphem'd. If I can contribute any thing towards a general Repentance for so heinous a Crime, by throwing in my Mite, and rectifying the Mistakes of some concerning the Nature and Lawfulness of a Solemn Oath, and put any Stop to this publick Dishonour of God's Name, by exposing the Sin and Folly of common Swearing, I shall think my self happy in my Endeavours and Studies.

My Beginning shall be with a Remark upon those Words of our Saviour, Matt. v. 34, &c. But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by Heaven, for it is God's Throne; nor by the Earth, for it is his Footstool; neither by Jerusalem, for it is the City of the Great King; neither shalt thou swear by thy Head, because thou canst not make one Hair white or black. But let your Communication be Yea, Yea, Nay, Nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of Evil.

There was a common Practice and Opinion prevail'd among the Jews, who thought it was Lawful in Humane Conversation

versation to Swear by God's Creatures, though to Swear directly by the Lord Jehovah in common Discourse was held on all hands to be Unlawful. Now our Saviour's Design in this Discourse was levell'd against this common Practice and Opinion, and he refutes the Errour with an Air of Authority suitable to his Divine Commission. *But I*, who am sent from God to correct the Mistakes of Mankind, and for that reason ought to be attended to, even *I say unto you*, *Swear not at all*, no more by God's Creatures, than the Lord Jehovah. *Swear not at all, neither by the Heaven, nor by the Earth, nor by Jerusalem, nor by thy Head*; in all which Instances, I suppose, he either gives us to understand that these were some of the usual Ways of Swearing amongst the Jews, or he produces them as Examples only to condemn all kinds of Oaths of this Nature.

He argues upon the Point with a Reason equal to his Authority. *Swear not by Heaven, for it is God's Throne*: And so he that Sweareth by it, Sweareth by him whose peculiar Residence and Seat is there. *Swear not by the Earth; for it is his Footstool*; and so it is Swearing by him who hath formed and fashion'd it. *Swear not*

not by Jerusalem, for it is the City of the Great King ; and he that Sweareth by it, Sweareth by that God who hath chosen this Place out of the whole World peculiarly for his Worship. Neither Swear by thy Head ; for as thou art what God has made you, and you can no more be otherwise than you can make one Hair white or black : So to Swear by your self or Head, is as much as to Swear by him that made you. So that the Jews Sware virtually by God, when they Swores by his Creatures.

And indeed to say otherwise was *incongruous and Nonsense*. For as the Apostle argues, *Heb. vi. 16. Men verily Swear by the greater*. And certainly an Oath is an Appeal to some intelligent Being superior to our selves, to a Being of Wisdom and Power, of Wisdom sufficient to discover the Truth of our Minds, and of Power sufficient to avenge the Falshood of our Mouths. Now if when we Swear by *Heaven*, by *Earth*, by *Jerusalem*, by the Head, we mean no more than the visible *Heaven*, than this material *Earth*, than a stately City and Temple, or than a Set of Flesh and Bones, we make an Appeal from a *Greater to a Less*, and call those things to be Witnesses of the Truth
of

of what we say, which have neither Sense, nor Life, nor Understanding in themselves. And I need not determine which of the two betrays the highest Weakness, whether he who offers an Oath in such a Sense, or he who believes upon the Evidence of such an Oath. Because upon sifting the Matter to the Bottom, the Impropriety and Folly appears to be so ridiculous and notorious, as cannot in either of the Cases gain Admission into the Mind of any Person even but of tolerable Consideration. And no doubt these Forms of Invocation do ultimately lead to an intelligent Being, who is appeal'd unto under these outward Signs and Representations.

This shall suffice for the *Occasion* and *Meaning* of the former Part of these Words of our Saviour. And we may learn from hence for our Instruction and Practice, that if we accustom our selves to Swear by *Heaven*, by our Faith, upon our Soul, upon our Salvation, or the like, we do in effect Swear by our Maker and Saviour, though we do not actually say by God and by *Jesus*. In such Cases we certainly stand condemn'd by this Precept of our Lord.

Swear

Swear not then neither by God nor his Creatures, but let your Communication be *Ten, Ten, Nay, Nay.* That is, let your ordinary and common Discourse consist barely in affirming or barely in denying a thing, without adding, *By Heaven it is so, or, By the Lord it is not so.* For an Oath is an Act of Religious Worship, and therefore ought not to be prostituted to every idle Purpose, trifling Matter, or vain Sentence. But if the Occasion be Urgent, and the Case somewhat Momentous, the Affirmation or Negation of the thing may be attended with an Assentation the more strongly to confirm what we assert or deny; which I suppose may be meant by our Saviour's doubling the Words, *Ten, Ten, Nay, Nay.* And whatsoever is more than these cometh of Evil. i. e. Whatever is beyond the bare affirming or denying a thing is Evil in it self, proceedeth from an evil Cause, and tendeth to carry on Evil in the World.

S E C T.

S E C T. II.

The Lawfulness and Necessity of a Solemn OATH before a Magistrate.

This I think will be made very apparent, from the *Nature* and *End* of a Solemn Oath, From the express Command of God, From the Examples of Patriarchs, *Christ*, and his Apostles, and from the *Universal Practice of Nations*.

First, From the Nature and End of a Solemn Oath.

An *Oath* is a *Religious Act*, wherein God is call'd upon as a *Witness* to the Truth of what we say, and as an *Avenger* if we speak false. And the *End* of it is for the *Confirmation* of a thing *doubtful* in its own *Nature*.

An *Oath* is an *Act of Religion*. For by making so Solemn an Appeal to God we highly magnifie his Divine Perfections. When we Swear by him, we acknowledge him to be a God of infinite Truth, Knowledge, Justice, and Power. Of Truth, and so not willing to deceive; of Knowledge, and so incapable of being deceived;

ceiv'd; of Justice, and so not byas'd by Partiality and Fear; and of Power, and so ready arm'd to execute Vengeance upon Perjur'd Wretches, upon those who presume to Swear falsely by his Name. And thus we see how Sacred an Oath is in it self, as it mightily tends to the Honour of God, by an implicite Confession of these his Attributes. And moreover, by the Consent of all Nations an Oath has been esteem'd a Religious Act, a Sacred and Binding Obligation. And the Solemn Invocation of God as a Witness is an immediate Instance of the Worship we pay to God in this Act. God observes what we say at all times, and wherever we are he is a certain Witness to our Expressions, whether we Swear or not, and we can go no where from his Presence. But it is the direct Calling upon God to be *then* a Witness to the Truth of what we at that time assert or promise, that makes it an Act of Religion and a Solemn Piece of Worship.

And yet in a Religious Oath we do not only appeal to the *Truth* of God as a *Witness*, but to the *Justice* of God as an *Avenger* if we speak false. And here lies the highest Sanction to oblige us to Swear in Truth, in Righteousness, and in Judgment.

Judgment. We appeal to God's Power, as well as Knowledge, when we swear by Him, and not only consent, but desire, that the Judgments of *Heaven* may overtake us, if we falsifie our Word, or do not speak the Truth, the whole Truth, and nothing but the Truth. There are various Forms of administering Oaths in various Nations and different Ages; but that which is usual and prevails in our own Country, and is establish'd by our own Laws, does emphatically express this binding Sanction. For at the End of our minister'd Oath it is particularly added, *So help ye God and the Contents of this Book.* To this Clause the Party Sworn gives his Assent by laying his Hand upon the Holy Gospel, and Kissing it. All which is as much as if he had said, *If I falsifie, let me have no Part in the Grace and Mercy of God, and in the Blood of Christ; may I be accursed in this World, and let my Name be blotted out of the Book of Life.*

Now, since this is the Nature of a Solemn Oath offer'd and taken before a Lawful Magistrate, I cannot conceive how any Person of the most scrupulous Judgment can possibly discern the least Moral Evil in any Part of it. It carries no Repugnancy to any one Principle of

Natural Reason, and is not only Lawful in it self, but upon many Accounts Necessary.

Especially if we consider the End of it, which is for the Confirmation of a thing doubtful in its own Nature. For several important Affairs of the World fall vastly short of being proved by evident Demonstration, and only depend upon the Testimony of Humane Faith. And since Humane Testimony may fail us, not only through the Want of Knowledge, but through the Want of Integrity, it is fit we shou'd have the utmost Satisfaction given us of speaking the Truth in Sincerity. And if an Appeal to the Knowledge of God as a Witness of Truth, and to the Justice of God as an Avenger of Falshood, will not gain Credit to our Words and Faith amongst Men. Disputes must never have an End, this being the last Trial that can be made, and no Evidence to be given beyond it. This made the Apostle to assert, *Heb. vi. 16.* *An Oath for Confirmation is to Men an End of all Strife.* And this has occasion'd all Nations to rest upon this Means as the final Decision of Controversies. It does not indeed follow, that the Truth is intirely found out through the Administration of

of an Oath. For the World, God knows, may be too full of Perjuries, and for this kind of false Swearing I fear this Land of ours does greatly mourn and is sadly expos'd to the Divine Judgments. But if Men will be so daringly impious as to out-sin this Method, and tell a Lie to the very Face of God, and invoke the God of Truth moreoyer to attest this Lie, we must be content to bear the injurious Consequences of such Blasphemy and Prophaness. Because there cannot be a higher Obligation laid upon the Consciences of Men to speak the Truth from their Hearts. And since the *Nature* of an Oath is an Appeal to the Knowledge and Justice of God, and the *End* of it is the Peace and Welfare of Men, the Administration of it must needs be both Lawful and Expedient.

Secondly, The taking of a Solemn Oath before a Lawful Magistrate in Judicial Cases appears to be Lawful and Necessary, From the *express Command* of God. For thus we read, Deut. vi. 13. *Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God and serve him, and shalt swear by his Name.* And our Saviour's Quoting of the Old Law, as a Caution against false Swearing, and as an Engagement to perform unto the Lord

our Oaths, *Matt.* v. 33. is a clear Indication of the Will of God in former Revelations, how Lawful and Necessary it was then esteem'd, and of what Obligation it was allow'd to be, and with what Solennity, Care, and Fidelity it ought to be attended to and fulfill'd. The very Guilt of Perjury so highly condemn'd in Holy Writ supposes the Lawfulness of Swearing truly in Judicial Cases. The least that we can draw from these express Passages is, how agreeable such a kind of Oath, seriously taken in Courts of Humane Judicature, for the Glory of God and the Confirmation of doubtful Matters, is to the Divine Will. And it must be a perfect Violence to our Thoughts to imagine, that God shou'd either command or allow of any thing in his reveal'd Will, that is in its own Nature morally Evil. Neither is there any Reason to think that his revealed Will in the Gospel is in this case contrary to the express Declaration of his Will under the Law and the Prophets. For although there is a *Dissenting Sect* of our own Nation, who make a Conscientious Scruple upon the Matter, and are the only Party of Men in the *Christian* World that refuse the taking of a Religious Oath, when summon'd to it by a Legal Authority:

Yet

Yet 'tis not their quoting this Precept of our Saviour's, *Swear not at all*, that lays any real Foundation for such a Scruple, or will in any wise justifie the Denial of it. For as all other Christians may be reasonably suppos'd to be as capable to understand and as unwilling to offend, as any of them can possibly be : So, since our Saviour himself hath immediately added by way of Explication, *But let your Communication be Tea, Tea, Nay, Nay, for whatsoever is more than these cometh of Evil*, it is undeniably evident that our Blessed Lord and Master only prohibited all Arbitrary and Voluntary Swearing, in ordinary and common Discourse amongst Men, but hath expressly by these Words commanded a Conscientious Regard to Truth, in our Intercourses and Promises with one another. And I heartily wish these Persons were as really Conscientious in speaking nothing but the Truth in the Management of their Worldly Affairs, as they are unreasonably Scrupulous in taking an Oath for the deciding of Controversies ; for then they wou'd fulfil the Command of Christ, the Command of Christ in this Place having no Regard to any thing farther. But if their Religious Tea proves to be Nay, and their Nay is found to be Tea ; if they make no Con-

science of Lying, whilst they pretend Conscience against Swearing, the Light that is in them is excessive, and I fear, wilful Darkness, and their Dissenting Scrupulosity owing to some other Principle than a Regard to Christ.

Thirdly, As a farther Condemnation of this unreasonable Scruple, we may add the Examples of God Himself, the Patriarchs, Christ, and his Apostles, who serve as commendable Precedents to justify our Imitation and Practice herein. In this Particular God gives us his own Example, who having no Greater to Swear by, Swears by Himself, as we read, Ezek. xxxiii. 11. *As I live saith the Lord God, I have no Pleasure in the Death of the Wicked:* And Jer. xxii. 5. *I Swear by My Self, saith the Lord, that this House shall become a Desolation.* When Abimelech King of Gerar convers'd with Abraham, and commanded him to Swear by God, that he would not deal falsely with him, Abraham readily comply'd, and said, *I will Swear*, Gen. xxi. 23, 24. And the same Patriarch made one of his Servants Swear unto him upon a particular Occasion, Gen. xxiv. 2, 3, 4. *Put I pray thee thy Hand under my Thigh* (which was the Form of giving an Oath at that time) *and I will make thee* Swear

Swear by the Lord, the God of Heaven and the God of Earth, that thou shalt not take a Wife unto my Son of the Daughters of the Canaanites amongst whom I dwell ; but thou shalt go unto my Country and to my Kindred, and take a Wife unto my Son Isaac. The Holy Apostles made use of this Way of invoking God to attest the Truth of what they said ; as St. Paul's Oath, Rom. i. 9. *God is my Witness : And Gal. i. 20. Behold before God I lie not.* And that which is most considerable and convincing in this Point is, That our Blessed Saviour answer'd upon Oath in Court when he was call'd thereunto. For thus we read Matt. xxvi. 63, 64. *The High Priest answer'd and said unto him, I adjure thee by the Living God, that thou tell us, whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God.* To this our Saviour answer'd, *Thou hast said.* Which Form of Speech as it was rightly understood by the Hearers, so it imply'd thus much, *Thou hast given me an Oath to declare unto you whether I be the Christ, the Son of the Living God ; and I answer before you upon your Adjuration, That it is so, as thou hast said, that I am the Christ, and that I am the Son of the Living God.* And this most certainly he wou'd not have done upon any account, had he himself by those foremention'd Words, *Swear not*

at all, meant an utter Prohibition of all Oaths upon the most solemn Occasion. What can be urged in this Case more powerfully Perswasive than these Considerations. I shall only add,

Fourthly, That it has been approved of by the universal Practice of all Nations. And it is strange that the Law of Nature shou'd dictate a thing which is Unlawful, or that shou'd have any moral Turpitude or Evil in it. Let us search into the ancient Statutes and modern Laws of every Country under Heaven; let us Read the Histories and observe the Schemes of Government in the Heathen, Jewish, and Christian World, and see what Methods the Wisdom of Rulers have pitch'd upon for the Security of Obedience, and the Discovery of Truth, and the Decision of Controversies, and we shall find the Solemnity of an Oath Universally to prevail as the last and utmost Test of humane Faith. And what a ridiculous Rudeness and conceited Arrogance is it, to say no worse, for a new upstart Generation of Men to contradict the general Suffrage of Mankind, as if all the World had been Wicked and Mistaken herein

herein except themselves and Two or Three more.

S E C T. III.

The sinful Nature of SWEARING in common Conversation.

Swearing in common Conversation is a very heinous and sinful Practice, because it is not us'd for a *Religious Act*. The Name of God is not at that time mention'd in a solemn Manner, with any Seriousness of Mind, nor the least Intention of Reverence and Worship. It is us'd with abundance of Rashness, and sometimes Men are Insensible thro' a customary Habit when they mention it, it is spoken of slightly, and Treated with Disrespect. There is no Design to magnifie his Knowledge, nor celebrate his Power, neither is that Deference paid to him in our Expressions that we show when we are speaking of the Acts, and Perfections, and Names of Princes or our Superiours. And what then can this be but in truth the taking of God's Name in Vain, which he has absolutely Forbidden us to do? What is this but in Reality to use him with Scorn and Contempt

Contempt who is the Being of Beings and Fountain of Honour, and to play, with a Blind and stupid Security, with that dreadful Name, which Rends the Mountains and Tears in Pieces the Rocks, and at whose Rebuke the Earth trembles, and the very Foundations of the Hills do shake? To dally with Majesty and Omnipotence in this Manner is to render it Cheap and Despicable. How can such Customs as these consist with the Belief of Providence and Revelation? We ought never to speak of God without rising up and calling him Blessed.

Again, Swearing, or Using the Name of God in common Conversation is a very heinous and sinful Practice, because it is not Us'd for a Religious End. All other lawful Oaths are intended, even in the very Administration of them, for the deciding of momentous Controversies, which cou'd be no otherways ended than by an Appeal to the Knowledge and Power of God. But how many unnecessary Oaths and Curses do we hear, and how much profane Talk is utter'd in mixt and merry Meetings? Vouries of Imprecations are express'd upon the most trifling Occasions and slightest Provocations.

vocations. The Majesty of Heaven and Earth is call'd to witness an impudent Saying, and his Name is taken to every five Words they utter ; and perhaps too, to justify silly and palpable Stories, and the most manifest Lies. Now far be it from any Christian to think such Practices Innocent. What unaccountable Boldness is this ? What can be more Insolent and Irreligious than to bring in God to attest our Trifles, to give Security for our Follies and Transgressions, and make up Part of our Diversion.

Besides, Swearing in common Conversation is a very heinous and sinful Practice, because it is a Breach of the Divine Commands. For God in his revealed Will by Moses expressly says, *Thou shall not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain.* In several other Places amongst the Prophets he has charged his People not to *Swear by his Name falsely.* Our Saviour enjoins his Disciples saying, *Swear not at all, but let your Communication be Yea, Yea, Nay, Nay.* And he tells them plainly, That *whatsoever is more than this cometh of Evil,* is not only morally Evil in it self, but proceedeth from an evil Cause, even the Devil that great Tempter,

ter, and tendeth to a great many evil Ends. Sit down a while and consider these things, vain Man, lay them to Heart and ponder them in thy Mind, and then think thy vain and rash Swearing by the God that made thee, and the Christ that Redeem'd thee, Innocent, if thou canst. The Law of thy God thou Readest to be plain against thee, all good Christians abhor such contemptuous horrid Expressions, and thy own Conscience, when pausing and awakened, must join him the Condemnation. For a farther Proof of the Guilt of this Sin, the Reader must be referr'd to its Consequences distinctly Consider'd in the next Section.

S E C T. IV.

The dismal Effects of prophane SWEARING.

THE dismal Effects extend to God, to others, and to our selves. It is a Dishonour to God, an Injury to others, and Dangerous to our selves.

First, Prophane Swearing is a Dishonour to God.

In

In a serious Calmnes we are ready enough to acknowledge, that God is Worthy of all Honour, Worship, Veneration, Esteem, and Service. Because he is Great and doth Wondrous things, and hath Power and Authority over us. Upon this account Praises ought to be Celebrated not only by us, but by all that shall come after us to the World's End, as well as the Saints and Angels in Heaven. But how little does our Practice and Opinion agree together, when we toss about the Name of his most Excellent Majesty in our unhallow'd Mouths often upon Trifling, and sometimes upon Sinful Occasions.

A common Swearer must be Guilty of the highest Irreverence. He plainly tells the World how lightly he regards the Almighty, and how earnestly he Propagates with a wicked Zeal the same Disesteem in Mankind. If he believes there is a God above, what must he fancy this God to be? Surely he must think him to be such a Deity, as the very Heathens worshipped, one Deaf, and Dumb, and Blind; a Deity that is not at all jealous of his Honour and Glory, but can sit down under every

Affront

Affront that is put upon him. We cannot imagine him to have any other Nation, who mingleth the Prophanations of God's Name with his Speeches, who calls the most Wise, the most Holy, the most powerful Being of the Universe, to be the Observer of Trifles, the Abettor of Evil, and the Approver of Injustice. And what is this but Disregarding, Disesteeming, and Dishonouring him in the highest Degree by our selves and in the sight of others.

Nay, This is such a kind of partial Dishonour, as (if we may Compare great things with small) we are not Guilty of in Parallel Cases amongst our selves. We seldom mention the Names of Kings, and Temporal Governours, or other Superiours, without great Composure of Mind and upon solemn Occasions; especially if they be not only Excellent in themselves, but actually Present with us, then it is done with the deepest Modesty and profoundest Submission.

Shall we then offer that Rudeness and Incivility, that Breach of Breeding and good Manners, if I may use the Expression, to our Infinite and Almighty Creator, which we wou'd Scorn to do to

a superior Mortal? Who is he amongst the Clouds that shall be compar'd unto the Lord? And what is he among the Gods that shall be like unto the Lord? He ought then very greatly to be fear'd in the Counsel of the Saints, and to be had in Reverence of all them that are round about him, and not to be Post-pon'd to any Potentate upon Earth.

Such a Dishonour has moreover the Circumstance of doing it to the very Face of God. For he sees us wherever we are, he watches whatever we do, is privy to the Thoughts of our Hearts, and observes every Expression of our Mouths. And how dare we call this God, who is so near us and *in whom we live and move and have our Beings*, to witness our Falshoods and Damn our Souls, Who, if his Mercies were not greater then our Iniquities deserv'd, might take us at our Word and send us quick into Hell? If King *Ahasuerus* made this angry Resentment upon Haman, *Will he force the Queen before me in the House?* What an Argument may we form for the greatness of the Guilt of Dishonouring the Name of God when God is actually present with us, and stands by to hear himself so horridly Abus'd?

Nay

Nay farther, we *Christians* may see our Guilt and Blush at this dishonouring the Name of the most true God, and speaking lightly and prophaneley of our immortal Souls and the Fundamental Principles of our most holy Religion, when we consider the *Practice* of the very *Heathens* in such Cases. For they wou'd never endure their Gods, which indeed were no Gods, to be Ill-spoken of or Defamed; neither were the Opinions which they held or the Principles which they believ'd and maintain'd, tho' Ridiculous and Absur'd, mention'd without a Superstitious Reverence. And if then the Persons, whom they Idolatrously Worship'd, were so highly Esteem'd as not to name them without Respect, and if the Religious Articles they espous'd were always worthy of deep Veneration, we may learn our *Sin* and *Shame* in Dishonouring the most true God and his most sacred Truths, since it is a Degree of Guilt the *Heathens* seldom fell into and carefully avoided.

Farther yet, This dishonouring the Name of God by common Swearing has this other aggravating Circumstance of Guilt, that it leads to destroy all solemn *Worship*

Worship of God and Obedience to his Laws. For I cannot think any Person will solemnly Worship him whom he does not most highly Esteem, nor obey his Laws with Sincerity whom he does not regard. Dis-esteem creates mean Thoughts, and Disobedience will be the natural Result of Disregard.

And as common Swearing is heinously Sinful, as it is a Dishonouring of God, which Honour is attended with Circumstances and Consequences of Guilt: So

Secondly, It is heinously Sinful, as it proves an *Injury to others.*

It is an *Injury to others.* Because it sets an ill Example to the World and draws many Men into the like Sin. Those that hear us Speaking of wicked Blasphemy and Talking against the most High, will be too effectually Instructed and Taught to do the same themselves. And is it not a sad thing to be the Propagator of Wickedness, to teach the World to despise God, to partake of other Mens Crimes, and perhaps to ruin their Souls Eternally. There is no Vice so soon, so easily Learnt as this of Swearing. This we may gather from observing how

R common

common it is to hear the very Children in the Streets taking the Name of their God in vain, even when they can scarce speak their own. Which was scarce possible for them to do, without having Examples of the like Nature amongst them, and hearing so frequently the same Expressions from others. And this Thought, Lodg'd deeply in our Minds, might (I'm sure it ought) engage us from thus Offending with our Tongue.

Again, common Swearing is an *Injury to others*. Because it too often leads to Perjury, a Sin very Pernicious to the Lives and Fortunes of Men. 'Tis indeed likely, that he, who Swears vainly for Trifles, will Swear falsely for Profit. For how can an Oath bind that Man, who has no Regard for God and Religion; And how then can an Oath be any Security to us against the Injuries and Wrongs of such Men, when they have the powerful Temptation of considerable Advantage by it. He, who never regards the Testimony of God at Home, will never regard the Testimony of God in Courts. And what a sad thing is it, that our Lives and Estates should lie at the Mercy of such Men's Oaths, as lightly value and set at naught the God they Swear by.

But

But suppose the common Swearer shou'd Swear in Truth, in Cases of Life and Death, Right or Wrong, when they come into Courts of Judgment, even against their Interest and their Affection, it is more owing to the Generosity of their Tempers, than the Respect they have to an Oath. And I am sure I shou'd think it very Injurious to the Safety and Happiness of a People, that all that they have in this World, and their very Lives too, shou'd be precariously Dependent upon the generous Temper of Wretches, so Prophane in their Expressions, so Loose in their Morals, and so Dishonourable in their Actions.

Nay yet again, common Swearing is an Injury to others: Because it fills up the Iniquities of a People, and hastens the Judgments of Heaven. For thus we Read in Jer. xxiii. 10. *Because of Swearing the Land mourneth.* It was the Sense of this prevailing Sin that made the Prophet to weep, and the Jews to mourn in the Prophet's Days. And most undoubtedly vain Swearing in common Conversation, and false Swearing in publick Courts at any Time and in every Place argues such an Increase of Prophaneness and Decay.

Decay of Religion, as will lay a Land desolate, and provoke God to say, *Shall I not visit for these things, saith the Lord, and shall not my Soul be Avenged of such a Nation as this!* And is it nothing, O thou vain Swearer, to be Instrumental to the Ruin of a People, and mix the Innocent with the Guilty in a spreading Calamity? I pray God our unhappy Proficiency, in these Sins, may not incense God to that Degree as to lay our Happiness in the Dust, and punish us as we deserve in a remarkable Manner till we learn not to Blaspheme. Every time we Swear rashly and falsely, we are adding to the heap of National Guilt, and Treasuring up Wrath against the Day of Wrath. And whenever we cause the Fury of the Lord to break forth, we cannot fail of being Injurious to our Neighbours. Because the Good as well as Bad, thro' our Iniquity will be involv'd in the same common Fate.

Thirdly, Common Swearing has dismal Effects, as it proves Dangerous to our selves. This will be Evident by considering, what may justly be Expected both from God and Man.

First, *Deceit*

First, From God. Shou'd the Almighty take a Swearer at his Word, and send Damnation upon him when he calls for it, and desires it, and has so often wish'd it, 'twou'd be but a just and equitable Judgment. And is there any thing in Nature so barbarous to it self, as he is to his own Soul, in Praying to God to deliver him up to the Power and Punishment of the Devil? O thou vain Swearer! Are the Torments of Hell desirable? Canst thou dwell with Everlasting Burnings? Is it not a terrible thing to fall into the Hands of an Angry God? Why then dost thou desire God to lay these things upon thy Soul? Oh let the Inhumanity and Horrour of this Sin, discourage and terrifie thee from it.

But it is not a dangerous Sin, only because God may justly deal with the Offender according to his own Wishes and Desires, but because he will pursue such a Sinner with his Judgments, according to his own express Threatnings. For in the third Commandment he declares, that He will not hold him Guiltless that taketh his Name in vain, that is, he shall be held Guilty, and by no means escape his Vengeance. There are other Places

where God speaks terribly to all that are guilty of this Sin. I will name but two at present. *Zechariah viii. 12.* *I will bring the Curse, saith the Lord of Hosts, and it shall enter into the House of him that sweareth falsely by my Name, and shall remain in the midst thereof, and consume it with the Timber thereof, and the Stones thereof.* And in *Deut. xxviii. 58, 59.* *If thou wil not observe to fear this Glorious and Fearful Name, the Lord thy God, then the Lord will make thy Plagues wonderful, and the Plagues of thy Seed.* And yet what are these Temporal Judgments and Sore Calamities, which are threaten'd by God, and have been executed upon Men, when compar'd with the Eternal Punishments lawaiting this Guilt in the other State? Those many Oaths, which now vanish in the speaking and fly into the Air, will all meet their Offenders, and center in the nethermost Hell. Where they, who have had Damnation so often in their Mouths, will without a particular Repentance, find themselves eternally Damn'd at last. For what Assurance can they have, that the Blood and Wounds of the Son of God will Save, when they swear it away, and thrust it from them with both Arms.

Wou'd

Wou'd Men but admit such Thoughts, and ruminate on these Dangers, they wou'd serve as so many dissuasive Arguments. But neglecting such Considerations, they neglect the Means of their own Security, and speak as if they wou'd be reveng'd on their Maker for giving them a Tongue. Whilst, alas! Those many horrid Oaths and Curses, which are heard almost Day and Night in our Streets, neither wound the Almighty nor their Neighbours, but fall and return heavily upon themselves in this and another State. But

Secondly, Common Swearing is a Vice dangerous to *our selves*, when we consider what may be expected from *Man*. Our Reputation is blasted by it, it sinks our Credit in the World, and proves prejudicial to our Estates. The two former of these Inconveniences I shall shortly have Occasion to mention in another Place. The latter I at present infer, not only from the Curse of Divine Providence, and the Want of Fame and Faith amongst Men, which are Means likely enough to lead to Decay; but also from the Penalties arising from the Breach of those Statutes and Laws, which the Wis-

dom and Zeal of our Governours have thought fit to make against this Vice. If these were duly executed upon proper Objects (and it is an Injury to our God, to our Country, and to the Poor, when they are not) a heavy Burthen would probably be felt, especially by those of an inferior Rank, who by this means might be brought under the happy Necessity, either of forsaking the Sin, or of losing their Substance.

SIECT

The Causes of vain SWEARING examin'd.

THE many bad Examples of Christian Parents, who are Offenders in this kind, is the first powerful and prevailing Encouragement to this Sin.

What a fatal Influence will Examples have upon the World, needs no other Proof than sad Experience! And it is an undeniable, though shameful Observation, that there are Persons of all Ages, yea of both Sexes too, to their great Reproach, that are Profaners of this Tremendous Name of God. Now when this comes to be the unhappy Case of Parents, who

daily

daily converse with their Children, and whom the Children, of all Persons, delight to obserue and love to imitate, when they in Heat and Passion invoke God, Swear lightly and falsely by his Name, and call Heaven to witness in their ordinary and common Discourse, with what Reason can it be exprested the Children shou'd use both it and him with more Awful Regard and Reverence? They naturally learn to speak what they hear proceed out of the Mouths of their Parents. And being thus unhappily taught to Curse and Swear at home, they use it so much in Practice abroad, when they go into Company and are dispos'd of in the World. It must be look'd upon in a Christian Country to be a horrid Shame to hear evn Children offending in this manner. I do not mean that it is a Shame to the Children; for they alas, know no better. But 'tis the Shame of those Parents, who will not teach them a more Pious and Just Sense of God, a more Reverend Usage of his Holy Name. At their Doors in the Beginning it must be laid, there being no Temptation to it in Nature. Other Vices propose either Pleasure or Profit to some corrupt Appetite and

and inward Inclination; but *This* hath nothing of these to gratifie, and it is impossible Children shou'd naturally learn to abuse the Name of God, if they did not frequently hear it uttered in such a manner. If we narrowly observe such Children as are addicted to this Vice, and particularly inquire into the Manners of those that begat them, I fear we shall find them loose and Immoral enough. And on the contrary Pious Families seldom send abroad so wicked an Off-spring, especially whilst they continue Young, and remain under the Care and Tuvelage of such Parents. This from the Consideration of both Extremes, is a plain Demonstration, how Damning Parents occasion and encourage such Damning Sins! And I wish they would seriously lay this Truth to Heart, and consider how much Guilt they thus contract to themselves, derive upon their Children, and convey into the World, and learn from hence to keep their Mouths as it were with a Bridle at all times, but most especially whilst their Children are in sight, lest they offend in this kind with their Tongue.

Secondly A General Neglect of a Strict and Religious Education gives an unhappy

py Occasion and Rise to this Sin of common Swearing, even when the Parents may fear an Oath themselves. And if this Neglect discover it self, either in keeping them ignorant of the Majesty of God, or not sufficiently restraining them from the Society of wicked Men, I do not see what Guard they have for a Defence against this Sin, when they are engag'd with any Temptation to it.

When Persons are taught at first how Great and Glorious a Being that God is, whom they are oblig'd to worship, and the Relation they stand in to him, as their *Creator, Redeemer, Sanctifier, and Judge*; they cannot easily be induc'd to speak lightly of his Name, they can neither think of him nor speak of him without the deepest Veneration. But the Want of insfilling this Knowledge into the Minds of Youth, which is so visible as to be lamented and wish'd to be remedy'd, leads the Way to set at naught that God, whose Perfections they know not. Contempt naturally arises from Disesteem, and Disesteem as naturally proceeds from Ignorance of Perfections.

Espcially, when with this Ignorance in their Minds, they are not sufficiently restrain'd

restrain'd from the Society of wicked Men. For having no good Principles lodg'd in their Souls, they are the soonest led aside and overcome by the InSTRUCTIONS and Examples of the Workers of Iniquity with whom they converse; amongst whom there is no one Vice more commonly practis'd, sooner learn'd, and farther propagated, than this of Swearing. And when Children are barbarously permitted to rake about into any Company, without Direction or Guide, according to their own wild and roving Fancies, no wonder that they, thus unarm'd and thus engag'd, fall into this Impiety amongst other Abominations. There is a great deal of Truth in that English Observation, *Show me your Company and I will shew you your Manners.* Whilst Men have their Ears stunn'd with execrable Oaths and repeated Curses, 'tis almost natural for them to receive very deep and lasting Impressions from thence.

The best Advice that can now be drawn, by way of Remedy and Prevention, is to beg of Parents, Tutors, and Guardians, strictly to keep all those from ill Company, whom Nature, Necessity, or Charity has plac'd under their Care, if they have any Regard to their own Duty,

ty, God's Honour, and the Children's Happiness and Vertue. There can no Good come from keeping ill Company, but all the Mischiefs and Dangers that can possibly befall the World. And therefore to make a Choice for them of what Company they shall keep whilst they are with us, and to direct them how to make a good Choice for themselves when they have left us, is the strongest Guard of Innocency, and the best Preservative against all manner of Sin in the World, and this Sin most especially.

Thirdly, *Want of Faith* amongst Men is another great Cause of this vile Practice.

Oaths and Imprecations are made use of to induce the World to believe the Truth of what they affirm, and the Reality of what they promise. Such a Design in view needs no other Proof but Experimental Observation, nor any other Conviction under this Head, than this, that it derives a *Blemish* upon their Honour, and discovers a *Weakness* in their Understanding.

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As to the **Blemish** upon their Honour, I affirm, that this End, which is the Intention and Motive of most such Offenders, they cannot have resort unto, without being jealous of one another's Credit and Sincerity. For were the Generality of Men more religiously just and morally honest in their Words, they wou'd be less profuse of their Oaths. A Good Man's Word is better than a Thousand Oaths of the Profane, who, if they were not conscious to themselves of being overtaken before in Falsities and Lies, there wou'd be no Temptation to use Swearing for a Confirmation of what they say, and to gain Belief to their Designs. And what greater Aspersion can be cast upon his Honour, than thus to undermine his own Veracity and give himself the Lie, which, if offer'd from another, wou'd be an Affront so highly resented as to deserve a Stab.

But this End and Practice does not only derive a Blemish upon their Honour, as I shall make a little more apparent under the next Particular, but it discovers a Weakness in the Understanding. For as he who hath Recourse to Oaths to confirm his

his Word, hath an ill Opinion of himself: So he is not the sooner believ'd by others upon that account, and by this means is notoriously deceiv'd in the End he aims at. Men are apt to suspect there is little Honesty at the Bottom, when Profaneness is brought in to bear Testimony to Truth. The Number and Freedom of his Oaths create a Distrust rather than Faith in Mankind. The Credit of his Words at other times is undermin'd by his vain and common Swearing at some times, and the World hath just Cause to think and fear, that he, who maketh no Conscience of Swearing, will make little Conscience of Lying. So that this Sin at once strikes off the Credit of our Oath and the Credit of our Words, and through the Habitual Practice of this Vice we become at last as little regarded for what we Say as for what we Swear.

These Reflections do discover the Force of Truth, the Power of Honesty, how little either of them stand in need of such a Support, how certainly such a Support will fail amongst Wise Men and Good Men. I urge them all upon the Mind to be consider'd, hoping by such Considerations they will proye powerful Dissuasives

Dissuasives from following such a Practice, for the pursuing of such an End. And I do not so much wonder at profligate Wretches taking this wicked Course in order to be believ'd; as wondring condemn some others in the World, who from an unreasonable Suspicion and Passion of Fear, even extort them to give such an Evidence of the Sincerity of what they say or intend to do: Because this makes them guilty both of *Folly* and *Sin*; of *Folly*, for believing them; and of *Sin*, for forcing them to Swear.

Fourthly, Tis a rude Sign of a very loose and degenerate Age, when any thing morally Evil in it self becomes either Common, or *Fashionable*, or *Genteel*. And this is shamefully pleaded by way of Excuse for this Sin of Swearing, and proves a powerful prevailing Encouragement to the Practice of it. Was the Name of God more reverently us'd, and less frequently mention'd in idle Discourse and common Conversation, to vain Ends and wicked Purposes; an Oath wou'd startle our Souls, and the Word *damnation* make our Hearts to tremble; but the general Custom of abusing this Holy Name, has lessen'd the *odium* due to the Vice, and reconcil'd the

the World to so dangerous a Practice; and impos'd upon it to such a Degree, that many think it an Ornament of Speech and the Height of Breeding, to Curse with a Grace and Damn with Authority. Impious Men seem resolv'd, not only to equal, but to outvie one another herein; and that, not only in the Number and Heinousness of their Oaths, but even in the Manner of Swearing, some profane Bops having affected a Finess of Speech and Modish Way in these Expressions; and they are ready to value themselves for Swearing a little more handsomely than the Clownish Vulgar. If Saint Paul was to walk through our Streets, as he once did through those of Athens, and made these Observations as he went (and they cou'd not wellescape his Notice) wou'd he not stand amaz'd and say, What God does this People serve, who thus sport with Hell, and prostitute the Majestick Name of Heaven, and glory in their Shame, and speak so contemnably of the Wounds and Blood of the Holy Jesus, of the Son of God.

'Tis hard upon us, that we are forced to mention, and which is more, to answer such horrid Pleas. And yet, since there is no securing of Virtue without exposing

exposing the Motives to Vice, in this Case I shall be Determin'd by one of the Proverbs of the Wise Man, Prov. xxvi. 5. *Answer a Fool according to his Folly, least he be Wise in his own Conceit.* Here then I cannot but urge against him, that, let the Number of this kind of Sinners be never so Great, and let the Quality of this sort of Offenders be never so Noble, there is however neither Safety, nor Civility, nor Honour in vain Swearing. And this Charge which I urge is very easy to be Proved in a few Words.

First, There is no Safety in this Practice, tho' we shou'd suppose it to be general. For Numbers do not alter the Natures of things, and Right and Wrong are not to be gathet'd from the Votes of Men and the Customs of the World, but from the Law of Reason and the Word of God. Such an Action will undoubtedly be Sinful, tho' loose Men shou'd think otherwise and take contrary Courses.

And as Numbers cannot Justifie it before God, in opposition to his Laws: So neither can they Defend it against God in Opposition to his Threatnings. Indeed

Indeed it sometimes falls out, that Kings cannot punish Rebellious Subjects, because their Number exceed their Power. But what is this to an Omnipotent God, to the Lord of Hosts, mighty to save and to destroy? What is this to the King of Heaven, whose Frowns are a consuming Fire, who can dash in Pieces the whole Creation, much sooner Man, wicked Man, tho' he be a considerable Part of the Universe? Settle it therefore in your Hearts, as an useful Armour, that, not *against* the Lord, but *with* the Lord only, there is Safety.

Secondly, There is no Civility in this modish Practice of vain Swearing. For Civility, according to the Judgement and Example of Persons of the highest Breeding, has ever been thought to consist, in such a condescending Humour and Behaviour, as to give no just Offence to any. Whereas those, who are resolv'd against being Corrupted by the Examples of prophanie Swearers, are yet highly Offended at their repeated Oaths and Imprecations. To sober and good Men it must needs be very Disagreeable and Grating, to hear the Majesty of that God, whom they Worship, whom they Honour, treated with so little Respect.

We cannot hear our Friend affronted without being moved and thinking our selves Oblig'd to offer something, some thing even with Zeal, in his Behalf. Now God is every good Man's Friend; A good Man *thinks* him so, and he *finds* him so, and it must then Wound him to the very Soul to have him us'd with a contemptuous Disdain.

So that common Swearing is a very Uncivil, as well as dangerous, Vice; an Offence to the Religious, as well as a Temptation to the Unwary. Society is Sowred, and a great Part of the Company perhaps Affronted by it. The Want of Sense, the Want of good Manners, the Want of Religion, is so much Discover'd by this Sin, as exposes a Man to the Contempt of all Wise and good Men: And several Offenders of this kind are so Conscious of this Truth, that they do in some Sorts of Company out of Civility actually refrain from it. Which shews, how much it is in their Power to avoid it, how Criminal they are in being Guilty of it, and how Weak others are in being drawn into it from the Argument of its being Modish. Neither
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Thirdly, Can there be any Honour in this Vice, how Genteel soever it may be thought by some of its Advocates; because the inward Esteem of Wise and good Men, whose Judgments alone are Valuable, is the true Notion of Honour: And that Esteem must arise from some Excellencies and Perfections which are above the Capacity and Attainment of Vulgar sort of People. Now it is Impossible for any Persons either of Sense or Conscience to think well of a Swearer purely for his Prophane Swearing. And it is so far from being like a Gentleman of Quality, that it is a *levelling Principle*, and confounds the Distinctions of Persons and Stations, and sets the *Refuse* of Mankind upon the same Grounds with the *Best*. If to Rant and Hector, and Damn and Swear, be to be Great, a Porter may be as Excellent as any One of the prime Nobility, if he be not of the Two the more honourable Person both for Invention, Expression and Practice.

I hope by this time we are all Convinc'd, that there is neither Safety, nor Civility, nor Honour, in this Vice, how Common, how Modish, how Genteel soever

soever it may be Thought ; and that we shou'd not be prevail'd upon by these, or any such like, Reasons, to join in Affinity with the People of such Abominations.

Lastly, There is one more Cause of common Swearing, which I shall just Mention, and that is, Custom. I do not mean, that it gives the first Rise to it; because 'tis Impossible there shou'd be a Custom in any thing without many Precedent repeated Acts. But that it is the Cause of Men's Continuance, Growth, and Perfection in it. I verily believe some Persons have been so long accustom'd to this Sin, that they do not know they Swear even when they have Sworn, and so long us'd to such kind of Expressions, that they come as it were Naturally from them, even before they are aware. This is so far from being a just Excuse, as it is commonly urg'd and pleaded for this End, that it is one of the highest Aggravations of the Sin, and betrays a complicated continued Guilt. If we be but willing to see, it sets before our Eyes the Evil we have Contracted and the Danger we are Expos'd to. And the Sense of the Danger shou'd awaken us Heartily.

Heartily to repent of the Sin, and to evidence the Sincerity of our Repentance by our endeavouring entirely to forsake it.

S E C T. VI.

A Concluding APPLICATION.

That I may assist in *Reformation*, as well as argue for *Conviction*, I shall Conclude with an earnest Exhortation to dissuade the World from the profane Practice of common Swearing. And here I judge it Expedient to apply my self to those who are Guilty of it, by way of *Remedy*; to those who are not Guilty of it by way of *Prevention*, and then to urge, the *Necessity* of hindring this Sin in *others* as far we can.

First, To those who are Guilty of it by way of *Remedy.* If we have given way to Passion, and that Passion has transported us to this Vice, let us for the future be more Watchful over our Ways, our Tempers, and our Expressions. The Laws of God forbid it, the Laws of Men are against it, our Souls are Involv'd in the Guilt, others are In-

Jur'd by it, we cannot Practise it but at our own Perils, our Temporal and Eternal Interest is struck at by it. Oh then let us be Persuaded to break it off by Repentance, and never speak of God but in Religious Discourses, Devout Prayers, and Solemn Courts, and set a good Example to the World by thus Glorifying our *Father which is in Heaven.*

But besides the Sin, and Danger, and sinful Causes, of this Vice, which I have insisted upon, and you I hope will not easily forget, I think, it is a considerable Argument against the Sin, as well as an Aggravation of the Guilt if we continue in it, to think, that there is no Temptation to it, in Nature, and that there is neither *Pleasure* nor *Profit* to plead in its behalf. Other Vices carry the promising Appearances of these Advantages, and by this Means they gain a prevailing Dominion in the World. The Drunkard urges his Appetite of Thirst to Quench, and good Fellowship to Enjoy. The Adulterer pleads his Bodily Desires and the strong Inclinations of Nature for his Complaisance. The Robber by Land is drawn by the apparent Prospect of Temporal Gain. The Pirate at Sea hath the noble Prize of Ships richly

richly Laden from the Indies to whet his Courage for the Game. The Covetous sees a kind of Almighty Power in Money, and this makes him hug his Gold and pay Adoration to his Clods of Earth. The Dissembler hopes to make his Fortune by speaking Contrary to what he Thinks. But the Prophane Swearer has no inward Appetite to gratify, no outward Advantage to tempt, there is nothing in Nature to incline him to it. He purely Acts the Devil, and Sins only for Sin's sake.

Consider I beseech thee, what I have now said, thou vain Man, whoever thou art, that art addicted to this Vice, and be *Wise* for your Self, be *Grateful* to your God. The Air you Breathe in, the Earth you Tread upon, the Ground which Nourishes you, and the Fire that Warms you, are all the Gifts of God: And will you abuse the Name of him who hath so plentifully Provided for you? Is this your Gratitude to your God? And as for the Wisdom for your self, if he, who gain'd the whole World with the Loss of his Soul, was said in our Saviour's Judgment to have made but a foolish Bargain, you must be intolerably Weak in serving the Devil for Nought. You lose

lose your Credit, you blast your Reputation, you dishonour your God, you ruin your Soul, and all this to gain Nothing. Is this the wise Exchange you make for your self? *Necessity is laid upon me, yea, woe is unto me if I Preach not the Gospel. I pray ye therefore in Christ's Stead, be ye Reconciled unto God, give unto him the Honour due unto his Name, let him be Glorify'd upon Earth, and Turn ye, Turn ye, from your evil Ways; for my mill ye die, O House of Israel?*

Secondly, To those who are not Guilty of it, by way of Prevention. Where nothing can be more properly urg'd, than the offering such Rules and Directions as are necessary to avoid it. And

First, As no Effect can be without its proper Cause: So when the Cause is taken away, the Effect is naturally prevented. Least Passion shou'd Occasion this Vice, we must avoid giving Offence unjustly to others and too easily taking Offence our selves. Least Drunkenness shou'd Provoke us to this Sin, we must Watch, and be Sober and Temperate in all things. And we must shun very carefully the Society of such Prophane Wretches,

Wretches, and take up the holy Resolution of David, *Away from me, ye Wicked, I will keep the Commandments of my God.* least, evil Communications corrupt good Manners. By narrowly Observing these provoking Occasions, we shall be securely Fore-arm'd against such an Offence.

Secondly, Let us in all Cases, even to a Nicety, be True to our Word, and Faithful to our Promise. Thus what we say will undoubtedly be depended on. Then we shall have no Temptation to evidence the Sincerity of our Thoughts by the Horridness of Oaths, and prove the Veracity of our Expressions by the Sin of Imprecations.

Thirdly, Let us reflect seriously and often on that Word *damnation*, which is so frequently Used in Conversation. Think of those Astonishing and endless Miseries which it Comprehends, and which every Swearer desires to fall upon himself and others. Such a Thought will make every Power of our Souls to Tremble, and engage us to avoid the Sin that leadeth to it.

Fourthly, Let us possess our Minds with a due and awful Sense of the *Divine*

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dine Majesty, and particularly consider His Holyness, His Wisdom, His Justice, and His Power. A Holy God cannot but hate Sin, a Wise God will certainly discover it, a Just God to be sure will Punish it, and a Powerful God is able to Inflict it. These self-evident Notions will directly lead us to Reverence that fearful and glorious Name, the Lord our God.

Fifthly, Let us devoutly and daily beg of God, that his Name may be hallow'd by us, that we may not upon any Occasions be so far overcome as to abuse it. First, let us remember how God has expressly said in the Third Commandment, *Thou shall not take the Name of the Lord thy God in Vain, for the Lord will not hold him Guiltless that taketh his Name in Vain.* And then let us Join with our Church, and say, *Lord have Mercy upon us and incline our Hearts to keep this Law.*

After this Application made to the Guilty and to the Innocent distinctly, from the Guilt, Sin, and Danger of common Swearing, I shall in general only inser

Thirdly, The Necessity of hindring this Sin in others as far as we can,

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We shou'd never hear it in the Senate but with Abhorrence; we shou'd never hear it in common Conversation without gentle Checks, without prudent Reasons and Admonitions; we shou'd deeply lament the Guilt when we Pray unto God. The Laws are very strict in such Cases, and Punishment ought to be Apply'd when other reclaiming Methods fail of their designed End. Then in deed Severity to punish is truly Mercy, Mercy to the Offender, and Mercy to the Publick. Whilst we consider how Prevailing this Sin is in our Nation, and how the Judgments of Heaven hang over our Heads for it ready to Break in upon us and Consume us, we can't but see the absolute Duty for such Endeavours towards them that are without.

As for our own private Families, how ought we to take especial Care, that our Children and Servants do not accustom themselves to take the Name of God in vain, that they be not brought up or allow'd to Curse and Swear, that due Correction and Punishment be given according to our Authority whensoever they presume thus to Offend. This is the Way to reclaim the Guilty, and preserve
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the Innocent from being Corrupted. This is the Way to promote the Honour of God, to save the Souls of Men, and gain the Favour of Heaven and the Blessings of Divine Providence upon our Labours. For how shou'd a Damning Family expect to Prosper, or why shou'd God bless those who Dishonour him.

If then we have any Pity for our Selves, any Bowels of Compassion for our Children, any Spark of Charity for our Brethren, any Zeal for God, or Value for Immortal Souls, if we have any generous Love for our Country, any warm Desire to Preserve our Church from Ruin, and help a sinking Nation, Let us begin our selves, and Instruct others, to fear this Glorious and fearful Name, *the Lord our God*, that it may be well with us and with our Children after us for Ever.

ESSAY

ESSAY V.

The LORD's DAY.
S E C T. I. *Is it lawful to do Works of Necessity and Charity on the LORD's DAY? Allowed and Stated.*

THE moral Part of the Fourth Commandment, so far as it Relates to the Separating *One Day in Seven* peculiarly to be Sanctify'd, has Universally Prevail'd wherever true Religion was Preserv'd. In the Beginning of the World the *Seventh Day* of the Week was appointed for this End; because on that Day God Rested from the Works of his own Hands, and so wou'd have us Rest from our Worldly Occupations, and Worship him as our Creator, who made us and all the World. The Jews by a new express Precept observ'd that very

very Day, not only in Memory of the Creation, but of their Deliverance from the *Egyptian Bondage*, and so Worship God as the Author of their Being and Well-being in the World.

One Day in Seven is still Observ'd by the Christians. But as the same Authority which at first fixes, can undoubtedly change Times and Seasons: So having the Examples of the Apostles for our Guide, who were inspir'd by the *Holy Ghost*, and the constant uninterrupted Practice of all Christian Churches ever since, for our Imitation, we want not Authority for the Change of the Sabbath from the *Seventh* to the *First Day* of the Week. We are farther confirm'd herein from the supporting Reasons of the Change, which does as far exceed that of the former Establishment, as Redemption is above Creation, and a Deliverance from Temporal Bondage much below a Deliverance from Eternal Misery. By us it is kept in Memory of the Resurrection of our Lord, and so upon this Account it is call'd the *Lord's Day*. But that which concerns God's Honour, and our own Duty and Happiness the most, is to consider and Anfwer the Design

Design, as well as understand the Appointment of the Day, good Practice being far more excellent than the clearest Notions; And for our stronger Engagement and better Direction in the due Observation of the Lord's Day, I purpose in the first place to shew, what kind of Works are Allowable on that Day, and what are Unlawful.

The express Letter of the Law of Moses commanded an absolute Rest to Man and Beast, to Bond and Free, Parent and Child: But the Author of our Religion, who came down from Heaven and perfectly knew the Will of the Lord, cou'd put the soundest Interpretation upon this Point. In opposition to the Hypocritical Reasoning of the Scribes and Pharisees he declares, God will have Mercy and not Sacrifice; That a Man may do Good on the Sabbath, and that it is much better to save Life than destroy it on that Day. He urges also their own Practice against themselves, That they lead out a Beast to the Watering; that if an Ass or an Ox fall into a Pit, they straitway pull it out on the Sabbath Day; and then he infers by way of Comment, How much is a Man better than a Beast? Hence we draw this Conclusion

Conclusion, That Works of *Necessity* and *Charity* are Lawful on the *Lord's Day*.

- And yet the Cases of *Necessity* and *Charity* may be falsely pleaded, are often misapply'd, and extended beyond their due Bounds. There are Difficulties which still remain to be examin'd and determin'd, *What* is lawfully *Necessary* and *Charitable* on the *Lord's Day*, and *Who* must be *Judges* of this Extent.

Shou'd I affirm, what has been often in my Thoughts, that those Decencies in Living, usual on other Days, shou'd in *some measure* bedisus'd on this, I am sensible of many that wou'd oppose it. And yet for my Life I can't forbear thinking so many Superfluities ought to be cut off, and the Subsistence of a Family brought into so narrow a Compass, that as *many* as possible may be sent to the Church, and the *fewest* Interruptions given to Divine Worship and Meditations. I am not willing to carry the Example of God, in appointing a double Quantity of *Manna* to be gather'd on the Sixth Day of the Week, and forewarning them from taking up any on the Sabbath; to the *utmost Stretch* that might be. But the Words of *Moses* upon that Occasion is worthy of our serious Remark,

mark, Exod. xvi. 23, 24, &c. This is that which the Lord hath said, To morrow is the Rest of the Holy Sabbath unto the Lord : Bake that which ye will bake to Day, and seeth that ye will seeth ; and that which remaineth over, lay up for you to be kept until the Morning, &c. The least that we can gather from them is, not to be equally sollicitous and busy, nice or exact, in providing for the Body on that Day ; much less to give way to Entertainments and Visitors, and so distract our Families and neglect our Duties, at a Time, when we are commanded by God to be entirely devoted to his Service. No manner of Work ought to be done for Commerce, Trade, or Gain. Nothing can truly be declar'd necessary but what the decent Preservation of the Life either of *Man* or *Beast* requires.

As to the Work of *Charity*, that may be as capable of being misapply'd as this other of *Necessity*. Civility is a *Christian* Duty in it self, and a common Duty to be paid to All : But through Mistake even this Civility may occasionally be styl'd *Christian Charity* ; and though it be allowable and necessary in its proper Sphere, yet is not so highly commendable, if carry'd on this Day to its highest Pitch. Since Works of *Charity* are al-

low'd on the *Sabbath*, Bounds must be set to the passing of a Judgment upon the one as well as the other. And surely nothing but the preventing the Miseries, or the removing the Misfortunes of our Neighbours must be call'd *Charity*. When their Circumstances are such as absolutely require our Assistance, and they can't be without it, and no other Time is allow'd for it, and they must suffer extremely by the Delay, we may and ought to lend our charitable and helping Hand. Our Saviour, who styles himself, *The Lord of the Sabbath*, more than allows it. The Life of a Beast is to be preserv'd, and certainly then the Life of Man. We may certainly cloathe the Naked, feed the Hungry, relieve the Distress'd, administer Medicines to heal the Dis-eas'd, and attend those that lie upon Languishing Beds, if we be either able or design to assist them by our Help, Advice or Prayers.

But then the proposing these Cases do undoubtedly exclude all *formal Visits*, which may be more seasonably made on other Days, and all impertinent and censorious Chat, which is at no time innocent, but at that time is attended

ded with double Guilt, the Breach of Charity, and the Breach of *Sabbath*. All this is design'd to distinguish Civility and Charity, that the one may not be taken for the other; and pleaded as an Excuse for the Neglect of a higher Duty. And as a Conclusion to this Reflection, it may be return'd as a *Doubt*, whether our visiting a sick Person on that Day, when he has more than enough to assist him, and we are unable to do him any Good, may be properly call'd a Charity of that Nature, as will be consistent with the Neglect of a Sublime Meditation and Flaming Piety.

S E C T. II.

The Positive Nature of the Rest on the

LORD'S DAY.

THAT we may the better understand and be more clearly directed, *How to observe the Sabbath in this Point*, I shall determine the *Positive Nature* of this Rest under three Particulars. 'Tis a Rest from *Worldly Occupations*, 'Tis a Rest from *Recreative Pleasures*, 'Tis indeed a Rest to the Body, but thereby design'd

the better to enable it to serve our God
and the Concerns of the Soul.

First, 'Tis a Rest from Worldly Occupations. That is, those Employments, by which our Affairs in this World are prosecuted on other Days, must be disus'd on this. Now the Temporal Business of our Stations ceases, projecting Contrivances of this kind must be laid aside, no Accounts are to be pass'd but those of a Spiritual Nature, 'tis a wrong Day for the reckoning with Servants and Labourers, the Pretence of Charity in such Cases is a profane Mistake, and the plain English of their Practice is, God allows them Six Days for themselves, and they will rob him of the Seventh. No Causes are to be try'd, no Markets to be kept, no Shops to be open'd, no Goods to be bought or sold purely for Gain, nor driven in order to these Ends, Commerce, Traffick, Trades are not to be exercis'd,

I. That the Jews, to whom this Command of resting and doing no manner of Work on the Sabbath, was at the first immediately and directly made, had this Notion of its Meaning, appears from the wicked Expostulation of those covetous and profane Wretches in the Prophet's Days,

Days, Amos viii. 6. Saying, When will the New-Moon be gone, that we may sell Corn? And the Sabbath, that we may set forth Wheat? When Nehemiah, by the Permission of Artaxerxes, was come to repair the Breaches, and preserve the Worship at Jerusalem, the Oath the People enter'd into against profaning the Sabbath after this manner, and the strict Care that Holy Man took against such a kind of Profanation, are farther Evidences of this Truth. The People sware to the Observation of this Rule, Neh. x. 29. 31. They enter'd into a Curse and into an Oath— That if the People of the Land bring Ware or any Victuals on the Sabbath Day to sell, they wou'd not buy it of them, on the Sabbath, or on the Holy-day. But the Holy Man's Care in procuring this Rest to be observ'd, and in suppressing and hindering the contrary profane Abuses, is very remarkable, and stands recorded for our Observation and Instruction, in Neh. xiii. from the 15th to the 23d Verse. In those Days saw I in Judah some treading Wine Presses on the Sabbath, and bringing in Sheaves, and loading Asses; as also Wine, Grapes and Figs, and all manner of Burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the Sabbath Day; and I testify'd against them in the Day wherein they sold Victuals. There dwelt

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Men of Tyre also therein, which brought Fish and all manner of Ware, and sold on the Sabbath unto the Children of Judah and in Jerusalem. Then I contended with the Nobles of Judah and said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the Sabbath Day? Did not your Fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this Evil upon us and upon this City? Yet ye bring more Wrath upon Israel by profaning the Sabbath? And it came to pass that when the Gates of Jerusalem began to be dark before the Sabbath, I commanded that the Gates shou'd be shut, and charged that they shou'd not be open'd till after the Sabbath; And some of my Servants set I at the Gates, that there shou'd no Burden be brought in on the Sabbath Day. So the Merchants and Sellers of all kind of Ware, lodged without Jerusalem once or twice. Then I testify'd against them and said unto them, Why lodge ye about the Walls? If ye do so again, I will lay Hands on you. From that time forth came they no more on the Sabbath. And I commanded the Levites that they shou'd cleanse themselves, and that they shou'd come, and keep the Gates, to sanctifie the Sabbath Day. This was the Notion, this the Zeal, these the Measures of this Holy Man in relation to the Sabbath.

And

And if we wou'd know the Sense of our own Nation in the Matter, the strict *Laws* of our Country will quickly inform us. The Statutes and Penalties, which the Wisdom of the whole Kingdom met together, have thought fit by joint Concurrence to enact, are sufficient Demonstrations against the Exercise of all manner of Trades on the *Lord's Day*.

Secondly, 'Tis a Rest from Recreative Pleasures.

By fixing this Notion I do not think, that a *Christian* is to be upon his Knees all the whole Day, and that he ought not to speak any thing but Sentences of Scripture. This confined Sense wou'd indeed deaden the Power of Devotion, and instead of exciting stifle a Religious Heat. Yet I cannot forbear acknowledging, that a serious Temper ought particularly to be cultivated on that Day, that grave and wise Discourse shou'd be observed and encourag'd, and that all light and frothy Recreations, which not only take up too much of our Time, but may be too apt to divert the Mind from the suitable momentous Matters, ought carefully to be avoided. We are commanded not to work, but it was not in order to
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rise up and play. Vain Pastimes are not to be indulg'd, because Worldly Business is forbidden. God did not intend the Encouragement of *Idleness*, *Vanity*, or *Sin*, when he said, *In that Day thou shalt do no manner of Work.*

Such Reflections closely pursued to their just and full Extent, will sufficiently discover the Guilt of those who spend the *Lord's Day* in Sleeping, in Feasting, in Idleness, and in Sports. And yet 'tis within the Compass of Observation to see a great Part of that Sacred Time swallow'd up by *One or More* of these abusive Ways.

Some, in our Saviour's Language, sleep on and take their Rest, dissolve in Ease, and lie stretching their Limbs upon their Beds and Couches, when they shou'd be rising up early, trimming their Lamps, watching and waiting upon the Lord. But this surely is a gross Abuse of the Goodness of *Heaven*. For since God hath set apart only One Day peculiarly for his Worship, and allow'd us Six wherein we may labour and do all that we have to do, we ought in Reason and Thankfulness to make God's Day at least as long as one of our own, and we cannot

cannot shorten it this Way without a real Mixture of Injury and Ingratitude together. 'Tis truly robbing God of his Right, and that sort of Robbery is one of the worst kinds of Theft.

Others there are, who by a mistaken and too large an Extension of the Festival Notion of the *Lord's Day*, make way for more Visits and Entertainments at that time than any other. But though the Church has forbidden any *Fast* to be kept on that Day, which had its Rise from a Ground and subject Matter of Joy and Triumph, yet the chief Notion of the Festivals of the Christian Church is *Joy in the Lord*; and whatever is inconsistent with a Spiritual Feast, and excludes the higher Duties observable on these Feasts, must be abolish'd: And indeed the Admission of Visitors, and the Practice and Expectation of Carnal Feasts on that Day, is a true Reason why so many stay away from the Church, and others are so little attentive when they are there.

If there be some, who being set free from Worldly Labour, think themselves at liberty to do nothing, but saunter about and waste their Time without Aim or Design,

Design, 'tis fit they also shou'd be set free from their Mistake. For Idleness in this Sense is a State neither fit for Man nor Beast, the *Lord's Day* nor any other, and is what the Angels in *Heaven* and the Devils in Hell by their various Activity condemn. We must not suppose ourselves at liberty to do nothing of any kind: All our Powers and Faculties are to be still in motion, must even now be set on work. All the Difference is, we have chang'd our Employment from *Earthly* to *Heavenly*, the Nature and Kind of our Business is only alter'd, and turn'd from the Body to the Soul. And therefore those are mightily to blame who care not how they fling away these precious Hours, who live without Thought and Spiritual Care, and if they compute the Numbers of the Minutes, can, I fear, produce but a slender Account of many of 'em spent to any Purpose at all, or at least to any serious and becoming Purpose.

But those are still to blame in a higher Degree, who will not be content with doing nothing at all, but will be employ'd on such things as ought not to be done, and are directly contrary to the Design of the Day. I do not mean on-

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ly such as will not rest even then from Sin, but serve the Devil on that Day more than God; and are oftner and longer at the *Ale-house*, at that time than at Church; but those also, who give themselves up to such Games, as the *Reason* of the Day and the *Laws* of the Land do highly disallow. For tho' we are oblig'd to rest from Sin on every Day as well as the *Lord's Day*, and sinning on the *Lord's Day* is really a double Guilt: Yet there are Sports and Recreations, too intemperately indulg'd and foonest snubb'd at the Beginning, which however innocent and allowable on other Days, are in all kinds strictly prohibited on This.

Thirdly, 'Tis indeed a Rest to the Body, but thereby design'd the better to enable it to serve God and the Concerns of the Soul.

God very well knew the Nature of Man, how incapable he was of doing and minding two different things at the same time. This made our Saviour lay down that Principle of his, *Ye cannot serve God and Mammon*. And that Lawful Business and necessary Religious Duties might have their several Turns without interfering, we are commanded

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to work Six Days and rest on a Seventh. To rest from Worldly Labours, to rest from Worldly Thoughts, to remove Temporal Concerns out of our Affections and from our Hands, that we may have more Time, a better Temper, a deeper Seriousness to serve our God, that our Thoughts may be Sanctify'd, and our Hearts Spiritualiz'd, and our Souls be carry'd with a flaming Piety to the Throne of our God. But what those Duties are in which we are to be employ'd, and by the Exercise of which we may be truly said to keep it Holy unto the Lord, will be fully consider'd in the next Section.

S E C T. III.

How the LORD's DAY is to be kept Holy.

THE Extent of the Religious Duties to be perform'd on this Day, must be measur'd by the various Circumstances of Persons. For under whatsoever Degree of Relation a Man is plac'd, there is in this respect something peculiar incumbent upon him, as distinct from that of his single Capacity. There are also some Festivals appointed by the Church

Church, to be in a more Solemn Manner celebrated on this Day, in a Wise, Religious and Grateful Commemoration of some of the extraordinary Mercies of God in the Redemption of Man. And these require Meditations and Exercises suitable to such Solemnities. But as these *Relative* and *Occasional Duties* may be compleatly perform'd by Christians of honest Endeavours, and the sincere Members of the Church, with a little Variation or Addition to the general Rules relating to the Sanctification of the *Lord's Day*: So the general Rules for this End, which I shall prescribe, will bear Reference to what is to be done *before*, *at*, and *after*, the publick Worship of God in the Church.

First, What is to be done *before* the publick Worship of God in the Church.

The best Way to the Church is thro' the Closet. If we are advised to prepare our selves before we pray in private, the Observation of this Rule is much more necessary upon our Appearance in publick, where the same God is to be worshipp'd, the same Duty to be perform'd, and the Example there either of Piety or Neglect is so apparently influential

ential upon others. Excited then with an ardent Zeal for the Honour of God, the Good of our Neighbour, and our own Salvation, let us rouse up our Souls early in the Morning on that Holy Day, and call upon them in this moving Strain; *Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from thy Bed, and Christ shall give thee Light.* For certainly nothing sooner darkens the Mind and deadens the Heart than indulged Drowsiness.

As we rise let us season our Minds with Reflections on the Attributes of God, particularly that of his Omnipresence; and let that most excellent Contemplation of the Psalmist be our first Meditation, *O Lord, thou hast searched me out and known me, thou knowest my down sitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my Thoughts long before; thou art about my Path, and about my Bed, and spiest out all my Ways.* For as this Bent of our Thoughts, this early Possession of the Mind, is of singular Advantage to the Happiness and Virtue of the Soul: So the fixed Notion of the All-seeing Eye of God, the Sense of so Holy, so Constant, so Impartial a Judge and Witness of our Conversation, will be one of the most effectual Means to regulate our Desires and lead

lead the Way to the sanctifying of the Body and Soul in all the Actions and Duties of the succeeding Day.

As soon as we are dress'd, and before we enter upon any other Duty, it is a Rule attended both with Reason and Use, to sit down and consider the *peculiar Design* of the Day, who it was that appointed it, and for what Ends. This will excite a flaming Zeal, an inward Purity, and holy Resolutions becoming the Great God. Then our Thoughts, our Words, our Affections, all the Powers of our Bodies and Souls will be devoted to Religion, and we made Partakers of Joy, of Peace, of Consolation in the Lord. Come, O my Soul; and let us reason together, *This is the Day which the Lord hath made, we will rejoice and be glad in it;* Banish all Worldly Thoughts out of thy Head, and Carnal Affections from thy Heart; rest unto the Lord, and be at liberty with all thy Powers to serve thy God: Let *Heaven* be thy View, and *Earth* thy Footstool, and so order thy Affairs and Time, as to be intirely devoted without Interruption to the *One Thing Needful*. Thou art always oblig'd to work out thy own Salvation Day by Day; but not to do this more eminently
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now according to the Divine Appointment, will be justly interpreted a Sacrilegious Alienation of this Holy Day.

Moved and season'd with these Meditations, we may proceed to the other Exercises proper to advance the peculiar Holiness of the Day ; where we shou'd do well to begin with *Reading the Psalms* appointed for the Morning Service. For these were writ in a Devotional Way, will give us just Notions of God and ourselves, furnish us with excellent Expressions, are a considerable Help to Piety, a most admirable Preparation for the Closet, and we shall after this Perusal be so well acquainted with their Sense and Meaning, as to repeat them with more Life and Knowledge in the Church. This done, let us go on to offer up our usual *Morning Prayers*, adding only One, in relation to the *Sanctification* of the *Lord's Day*, that God wou'd at that time enable us both publickly and privately to glorifie his Name in a more eminent Manner. And then for the remaining Interval of Time before we approach the Holy Temple among much People, that must be spent in lifting up our Hearts and Souls to God in *Divine Meditations*, in calling our Families together (if we have any) to read

Read the *Lessons*, and other practical Places of Scripture, and in joining in *Prayer* with them at Home. The next thing to be consider'd in Relation to the Duties of this Day, is,

or *Secondly*, What is to be done at the publick Worship of God in the Church.

When the Bells are Ringing to Summon the Congregation and call the People to Assemble; let us reflect, how the Laws of *Christ* oblige to Unity, how the Laws of the Land enjoin Conformity, the strong Obligations to constant Communion, and the many Benefits of joint Prayer, that holy Violence which taketh *Heaven* by Force. For this will keep us within the Pale of the Church, and make us endeavour to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace. Thus we shall be able to hold fast our Profession without Wavering; and be Preserv'd from the fly Insinuations of those Seducers, who Creep into Houses, and lead Captive silly People laden with Sins, and from being of the Number of those, who will not endure sound Doctrine; but after their own Lusts heap to themselves Teachers, having itching Ears.

As we are going, we wou'd do well to consider, that we are going to the House of God, that the Lord is in his Holy Temple, that the whole Earth ought to keep Silence before him. It will methinks Excite a pious Imitation in our Souls to consider the Passionate Joy, Resolution, Desire, and Petition of David upon such an Occasion ; One thing have I desir'd of the Lord, which I will require ; even that I may dwell in the House of the Lord, all the Days of my Life, to behold the fair Beauty of the Lord, and to Visit his Temple. O how Amiable are thy Dwellings, thou Lord of Hosts ! My Soul hath a Desire and Longing to enter into the Courts of the Lord ; my Heart and my Flesh rejoice in the Living God ; Yea the Sparrow hath found her an House, and the Swallow a Nest, where she may lay her Young, even thy Altars, O Lord of Hosts, my King and my God. Blessed are they that Dwell in thy House, they will be always Praising thee.

There is an Erroneous Practice too prevailing amongst many almost in every Parish, and that is, of coming so late to the Church, that the Prayers are begun and Part of them over before they Enter. And this ought in the first Place

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to be Remedied, as a Foundation to the rest of our Duty to be Perform'd there. The Bells Ring on purpose that the People should come at that very Time, and not stay in their Houses till they have done, or a Quarter of an Hour after. If they be there some time before the Beginning of the Service, this Time can't be look'd upon as Lost. The Place, the People, the Minister, will be apt to Excite good Thoughts in their Heads, and Warm the Affections of their Hearts. They will find themselves the more Compos'd, undoubtedly the fitter for the Sublime Exercises of Piety. And this shou'd prove a considerable Motive to an early Approach.

But shou'd they admit of any Unseasonable, Prophane Delay, they very soon lose the happy Opportunity of joining in the general Confession, and the real Benefit of Priestly Absolution. These are the principal Parts of our Morning Devotions; And the longer they are before they come, their Service is still so much the more Imperfect.

When we are prevail'd upon to go Early from Home, we ought to enter the Church as soon as we come there.

For *Louing* in the Church-Yard or other Part of the Church, and *Discoursing* of Worldly Matters, lays a real Foundation for wandring Thoughts, and Indisposeth us for Prayer. Upon our entring into our Pew, it will become us immedately to fall low on our Knees before his Footstool. There, from a Sense of our own Unworthiness and Unpreparedness of Heart, to appear before God, we shou'd be mov'd to beg of God to remove our Indispositions of Spirit for his Service, to prevent wandring, interrupting Thoughts, to lift up our Minds and Hearts to him, and to endue us with the Spirit of *Attention*, and the Spirit of *Fervour*. Thus our cold, benum'd Affections will be Inflam'd, our Minds be Fixt, Serious and Compos'd, and our Prayers return laden with Blessings plentifully pour'd down upon our Selves and Others.

From such happy Beginnings a Pious Temper is likely to be carried on and continued throughout the Whole; especially if we retain that due Respect for the publick Prayers which in Reason and Conscience we are oblig'd to shew. I think there is the more Occasion to mention this, because a kind of lessening Contempt

Contempt seems to be cast upon this best, this highest Act of Duty, by the Peoples Preferring Preaching before it, and Placing most of their Religion in Hearing of Sermons. There needs not much Proof of this Matter, this Judgment being formed, not only from Mens Expressions, but their outward Actions, the fullest Interpreter of their inward Thoughts. The Thinness of our Congregations, the Difficulty of bringing Persons to the Church, when, as they usually speak, *there is nothing but Prayers,* is an evident Demonstration of this Truth. Now although I shall be very far from giving the least Reflection upon Preaching, it being in its kind and Place a very useful Exercise, fit to be Us'd in the *Christian Church* as an excellent Means for the Propagating and Increasing the Knowledge of our Lord and Saviour *Jesus Christ* in the World: Yet must I freely own, and wish with all my Soul it was as faithfully Believ'd and as readily Receiv'd, that whenever the Comparison is (as in such a Case) fore'd to be made, the Duty of Prayer is to be Preferr'd before it. For *Preaching* is a *Humane Instruction* offer'd to *Men:* But *Prayer* is a *Christian Exercise* directly put up to *God.* 'Tis by *Prayer* in and

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thro' the Merits of Christ that we obtain the Remission of our Sins, the Assurances of the Holy Spirit, and the Blessings of Divine Providence for our Selves and Others concern'd in our Intercession: Whereas Preaching is only a *Means* to teach us *how* to Pray and Live as we ought, and certainly the *End* must be Preferable to the *Means*. The Want of these Notions in the Head deadens the Power of Devotion in the Heart; for Men always think long to come to that which they Love best and Value most; and so they are Dull and Uneasy during the Time of Prayers and are glad to Shuffle them over of any Fashion.

Take it then as a granted Principle that Prayer is the *best* and *chiefest* Duty of the *Lord's Day* or any Day of the Week. And this I am sure will be a considerable Help to make us the more Serious, Affectionate, and Watchful to perform every Part of it in a Religious and Acceptable Manner. When we are confessing our Sins, we shall then be mov'd to do it with deep Humility and Sorrow; In the Repeating the Psalms and setting forth the Praises of God, a Devotional Joy and Gratitude will exalt and overspread our Souls; in every Prayer

Prayer our Minds will go along with the Minister, and our Hearts be set upon the Petition, and we shall be able to say a Zealous Amen to each of them, and upon hearing the Portions of Scripture Read we shall attentively listen, if we take heed how we hear, and receive it as in Truth it is the Word of God able to make us Wise unto Salvation.

As the Priest's Lips shou'd keep Knowledge, so the People are to seek the Law in his Mouth. And therefore when the Word is Preach'd, there are two things which shou'd occur to our Minds, the Preacher and his Doctrine. The Preacher is to be consider'd as the Messenger of the Lord of Hosts, as the Steward of the Mysteries of the Gospel, as Ambassador for Christ, Sent and Appointed in the Church for the Perfecting of the Saints, for the Work of the Ministry, for the Edifying the Body of Christ, for the knitting it the more firmly together in the Bond of Holiness and Love, to Correct, to Reprove, to Exhort, to Instruct, and to Persuade with all Long-suffering and Patience, and to beseech Men in Christ's Stead to be Reconciled unto God. For when we think of his Character, Mission, and Office, we shall be provok'd to give the more

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more earnest Heed. Heed to his Doctrine and what he Delivers as well as Personal Character. We are to mind the Text he Pitches upon for his Subject, the Manner of his Explaining it, the Doctrine he draws from it, the Virtues, he Recommends to our Practice, the Sins he persuades us to abhor, what Arguments he uses for the Establishment of a sound Faith, what Directions he gives for the Perfecting of a good Life, and what Applications he makes to draw us from going on in a Course of Sin. Here is Matter enough to employ our Memory and Thoughts, and if we have any Sense of God or Regard to our Selves, Reason sufficient to fix our Attention.

The last thing I propos'd to observe in relation to the Duties of the Lord's Day, is,

Thirdly, What is to be done after the publick Worship of God in the Church.

As soon as the Minister comes out of the Pulpit, it is usually said, *The Sermon is done.* And so I fear it is, entirely done with many People. But believe me, though the Minister has Ended his Sermon, it is or should be only Begun as it were

were with the *Hearers*. If they come out of the Church grave and serious, and go directly home talking together, as the two Men in the Gospel travelling to *Emmaus*, of the things which they have heard and seen; if they faithfully remember what was there told them, and resolve henceforward to live better than they have done; then the Minister's Instructions have wrought some Good. 'Tis a certain Sign that the Sermon is quick and powerful, when the Conscience is awak'd, and the Heart is set *Heaven-ward*, we improv'd in Divine Knowledge, and made not only wiser but better *Christians*. Haste then to retire and meditate. Let this be the first Employment of your Mind after Church. The Benefit of this Exercise will amply compensate the Observation of this Rule.

When we have digested these things in our Memories for our own Sakes, it will be a proper Time to examine the *Understandings* and *Memories* of those that belong to our Family. For then we shall be able to discover, whether they are improv'd in their Knowledge, whether they observ'd what they heard, whether they understand what they observ'd, whether they are likely to retain what they understand.

derstand. And whereinsoever they prove defective, we are certainly the more capable of setting them right, and clearing our own Heads as well as theirs. Mutual Discourses are a Help to the Brain, and sink things deeper into the Heart. If Children and Servants were constantly call'd to give such an Account when they came home, it wou'd be an excellent Means to make 'em the more attentive at the Church; which, though at first proceeding from a Sense of Shame and Fear, might at last be resolv'd into a real Principle of Reverence and Conscience. And what through a more fix'd Attention at the Church, and a constant Repetition in their own Houses, the Word of God wou'd not be like the Seed sow'n by the Way-side, which the Devil immediately coming, taketh out of their Hearts.

Above all things Obedience to the Commandments of God must be made the End of all our Reading, Praying, Hearing, and Meditations. This we shall think our selves oblig'd to do, if we frequently think what our Saviour and his Apostle hath laid down and commanded in such a Case. *If ye know these things, saith Christ, John xiii. 17. happy are*

are ye if ye do them. And Saint James mightily presseth the same Lesson, James i. 22, 23, 24, 25. Be ye Doers of the Word, and not Hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a Hearer of the Word, and not a Doer, he is like unto a Man beholding his Natural Face in a Glass; for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of Man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect Law of Liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful Hearer, but a Doer of the Word, this Man shall be Blessed in his Deed.

I am not willing to carry these Matters to the utmost Height that Religion and Duty may require, nor so far as might be wish'd. 'Tis my Desire rather to lay down what Humane Nature will probably bear, and what may in Practice be expected: And I am confident I have laid down no more. And therefore I shall add only this, That the remaining Part of the Day be spent in Reading and Meditation, and closed up with Private Piety and Family Devotions.

S E C T.

S E C T. IV.*The Evil Consequences of profaning the
LORD'S DAY.*

WHilst we reflect, how deeply Men are involv'd in Secular Affairs, and what a little Time in the Week-days is allow'd by such for the Service of God and the Study of Religion, we may discern how reasonable it was for the Almighty to interpose and appoint a Day wholly to be spent in Honour to his Name, and for the Salvation of our Souls. The strict Observation of this Day undoubtedly keeps up the very Being, Life, and Spirit of Religion. Without such an Observation, 'tis much to be fear'd God wou'd be in Danger of an entire Banishment from the Minds of some Men. So that from this Reflection we may conclude, that every Profanation of this Day is not only an *Act* of *Impiety* in it self, but a considerable *Step* to *Atheism*. Men disbelieve the Principles of Religion, because they will not understand the Grounds of Faith. Constant Worship gives awful Apprehensions of the Divine Perfections. But when Persons live without God in the World, they

they may be easily brought to think there is none.

Again, The Contempt or Neglect of Instruction must end in Ignorance. If the Wisdom of a Learned Man cometh by Opportunity of Leisure, and he that hath little Busines shall become Wise, how can he get Wisdom that holdeth the Plough, and that glorieth in the Goad, that driveth Oxen, and is occupied in their Labours, and whose Talk is of Bullocks? Since God hath appointed Days and Ordinances, and a Priesthood to teach his People their Duty, the Divine Will must be a Secret, when Men will neither keep his Sabbaths nor reverence his Sanctuary. This is the Way to continue the Ignorant still in Darkness, and for the brightest Notions to set in a Cloud. Truth will not force its Way without Industry and against Inclination. 'Tis very easy for the Lazy to lose Parts, weaken the Judgment, and unlearn what before they knew. The Profaneness of the Heart will soon empty the Head. But Saint Paul became Learned by being brought up at the Feet of Gamaliel. Faith cometh by Hearing, and the Pulpit and Press are Assistants to the Understanding.

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But *Ignorance* and *Infidelity* are not the only, though the first ill Consequences of profaning the *Lord's Day*. Such ill Parents must produce indeed Monstrous Births. To sail without Pilot or Compass is a dangerous Voyage. In such a Case it will be entirely owing to a fortunate Chance, shou'd the Ship escape in a Tempest, or arrive safe to its Port. *Intellectual Darkness* is the same to *Moral Conduct*, as *Corporeal Blindness* is to the *Bodily Motions*. He, that walketh without Light; discerneth neither Ditch nor Precipice, stumbleth in his Steps; and knoweth not whither he goeth. And he that apprehendeth neither Sense of Sin nor Fear of Danger, cannot well take heed unto his Ways. 'Tis Education that polishes the Parts and reforms the Manners of Mankind. Though all knowing Persons are not Vertuous, yet there can be no true Virtue without clear Knowledge. Ignorance hath no inward Armour against the Success of any tempting Vice. Where no good Principles are lodg'd, no safe Security can be found.

This is what in *reason* may justly be fear'd from a Mind void of Divine Knowledge. But for the Unhappiness of this Profanation as to Immoralities in Practice

ctice, we must have recourse to Experience. And our Experience may be formed from our Observations upon those Places where the Lord's Day is the most Irregularly kept, and from the Confession of several Persons, who have dated the Original of their Crimes from the Breach of the Sabbath. V. this 3d Week in June 1711. R. H. Excess.

The Want of a necessary Subsistence for a Resident Minister in every Parish is a justly lamented Unhappiness in our Constitution, and unavoidably prevents the Execution of the Orders of the Church in so full a manner and with double Service, as she directs. So that in different Places of no great Distance, we may easily find the Lord's Day kept with different Constancy and various Degrees of Care and Piety. And as Probity of Manners, Integrity of Life, all Private and Social, Moral and Christian Virtues did flourish and abound, where the solemn Worship of God is duly perform'd with a becoming Reverence. So we may search and see the Effects of profaning this Day to be as dismal, as the Profanation is too common, and bearing a Proportion correspondent to the Extent of the Decay of Piety. Wherever the Service of God is declin'd, and the People

grow careless and indifferent whether they come to Church or not, that Place must be *comparatively* worse than their Neighbour-Villages, which live after a more Orderly and Religious Administration. So long as Rudeness of Temper and Ignorance of Truth, Strength of Passion and Weakness of Faith, Violations of Justice and Brutish Lusts, Riotous Excesses and Heathenish Practices, continue undoubted Signs of a degenerate Race, and are the common Consequences of breaking the Sabbath, this unhappy Truth will stand unshaken.

If a general Survey of Places will not satisfie, we must have recourse to the Confession of particular Persons for farther Conviction. No one can give a better Account of the Original of his own wicked Life, than the same wicked Man. And when a Man bears Testimony against himself, his Testimony must be true. Now I have had particular Opportunities of examining several notorious Offenders, who, when shackled in Chains in a dismal Confinement, and afterwards lying under the immediate Sentence of Death, have with a Multitude of Tears, and Hearts full of Sorrow, freely own'd to me for the

the Instruction of others, two principal Causes of their Sins, and all that Misery which their Sins had now deservedly brought upon them. And these Causes were, *Undutifulness to Parents and Breaking of the Sabbath*, tho' I am concern'd at present only with the last. They wou'd not be persuaded to go to Church, neither wou'd they stay at home to read that which was good. When others went to serve God, they sat Drinking in an *Ale-house* serving the Devil. Whilst others were met for Divine Worship, they continu'd to ransack their Houses and Grounds with greater Privacy and Security, as they thought and for a time found true. From Sabbath-Breakers they commenc'd House-Breakers, Tiplers, Debauchees, Shop-Lifters, Thieves, and Robbers, publick Pests in a Government, and the common Disturbers of Society.

I heartily wish the Profaners of the *Lord's Day* wou'd consider these Examples. For it is a sad thing to live, shut up in a Goal, deny'd of Liberty, depriv'd in a great measure of the publick Worship of God, reduc'd to a Necessitous and Low Condition. I cannot forbear intreating Men to set such Spectacles and Executions as Warnings before them

them. Because it is an amazing thing to take a deliberate Leave of the World, to be Healthful and Dead in a Quarter of an Hour, and to know it too, and to know our selves to have been the Cause of this untimely End.

Perhaps it may be urg'd, these Consequences extend only to a few particular Instances. For Men may neglect going to Church without *robbing* their Neighbours. Now though the Misfortune of Some shou'd make Others also fear proceeding in such provoking Crimes: Yet granting this Profanation does not betray us to such Vices as may either imprison, or expose us to Capital Punishment, there are Statutes for the due Observation of the *Lord's Day*, upon the Breach of which various Penalties are levy'd. The Laws have appointed Pecuniary Mulcts, to be laid upon those who *absent* from the Church, as well as upon such as sit *tipling* in Publick Houses, and a Commitment may ensue upon a Contempt of Authority. So that we fall under the Censure of a Wise and Religious Government for being barely profane, even supposing the Profanation to be attended with no other Crimes of a Congenial Nature.

But

But suppose the Profane, through a dexterous Management of himself, joyn'd with the Unfortunate Remissness of Magistrates, shou'd clearly escape, I will not say deserving, but *feeling* the Lash of Government of any kind, I cannot yet think his Profanation leads to no other inconvenient Vice. It is not only Evil in *it self*, but in Reason and Providence must tend to Evil.

We must think this Profanation in Reason will tend to Evil. Because the Soul of Man is an Active Principle. And this Person, being set free from the Pursuit of Worldly Business, and having no Inclination to Religious Matters, he will contrive or execute what is bad. The Devil will not suffer him to be idle. If he will not serve God, he must serve *Satan*. No Good can spring from raking abroad on the Lord's Day. All Sense of God and Reverence for His Laws is lost, and Drinking, Swearing, Whoring, Gaming, if not Thieving, are the too common Effects. And each of these is certainly attended with abundance of Mischiefs.

X. *This*

This Profanation in *Providence*, as well as *Reason* and *Experience* must tend to Evil; to the Evil of *Sin*, and to the Evil of *Punishment*.

To the Evil of *Sin*: Because when the Means of Grace are slighted, the Influences of the Spirit will be withdrawn. If we forsake God, God will forsake us. And, when left by God, how vain a thing is Man. After he has brought himself into so wretched a State, he cannot tell into what Sins he may fall. But this he may be sure of, he has no sufficient Defence against any Temptation whatsoever.

To the Evil of *Punishment*. First, With the present *Frowns* of a provok'd Providence. The Divine Wrath was very visible in his causing *Moses* to ^{* Num. xv.} Sentence that * Man to Death, who had contrary to the Commandment gather'd Sticks on the Sabbath-Day. The Crime must be far greater in him, who slighteth the publick Worship of God; and by consequence casts a Contempt upon God Himself. And since God's Delight is in the Saints that are in the Earth and upon such as excell in Virtue, what Favour

vour can *He* expect, what Blessing does *He* deserve, who with a Monstrous stupid Ingratitude gives so base a Return to his highest Benefactor? On such Occasions the affronted Majesty of Heaven and Earth has pour'd out full Vials of Displeasure, in Kind different, and various in Degree. This Profanation is like casting down Banks before the Ocean, when Misfortunes with an overflowing Tide, come in at the Breach, either upon his own Person, or his innocent Posterity. But suppose he shou'd not be punish'd in the Sight of Men, yet is he pursu'd secondly with the fearful Expectation of Eternal Sorrows. A Punishment so exquisite, though in Reserve, is a just Object of the closest Fear. The Shortness or Length of the Delay can be but a poor Circumstance to weigh against the Certainty of the Infliction. Then shall we discern between the Righteous and the Wicked; then a wide Difference will be made between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not. Nothing but Reformation in time can prevent this heavy Doom. In the mean while, so long as his Profanation continues, he will be punish'd, thirdly with the Contempt of Men of Sense and Conscience. His Practice must be, as far as in him lies, a de-

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sighted Reproach to theirs. Men of all Countries, of all Ages, of all Religions, have agreed in paying some kind of publick Worship. And therefore the slighting the Congregations of the World, the forsaking the Assemblies of the Saints is a conceited singularity, and a haughty Affront upon Mankind in general. The Wise and Good must entertain an ill Opinion of so scornful a Separation, and treat the vain Pretender to a Wisdom superior to his Neighbours, with a Disgrace suitable to his insolent Conduct. Let him stand, as he desires and deserves, branded with a Distinction remarkably Infamous, Abhor'd, Pitied, and Contemn'd.

These Reflections will help in some measure to convince us of the many Mischiefs attending the Neglect of Religious Duties on the Lord's Day. And if we have any Concern for the Exaltation of the Understanding, and Regulation of the Will, for the Removal of Ignorance and the Prevention of Sin; If we have any Reverence left for our Almighty Lord, or Remains of Fear from Humane Governours; if we have any Sense of Danger, either from present Curses or future Sorrows, we must be persuaded too to reform.

X
Much

Much more Enlargement might be made upon these several Heads, but I am apt to think, enough is already urg'd for a Warning and Benefit to those who are willing to amend. And if Men be too backward (as God knows they too commonly are) to apply the Arguments effectually to their own particular Case, we will in the next Place see what Assistance may be expected from others as a Remedy to this Profaneness.

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*Proper Remedies for the due Observation of
the Lord's Day.*

What particular Persons are to do of themselves, in order to their own Regulation, by the Operations of their own Mind, and the Care they are oblig'd to take of the Honour of God and their own Souls, may be collected out of the foregoing Considerations laid down in this Essay. There is Force and Direction sufficient for a Mind, willing to be mov'd and guided. But the Remedies here propos'd to be apply'd, are what may be expected from others, in the Cases of a prevailing Neglect and bold Profaneness.

faneness. Now the Sense of this and the abundant Mischief arising from it, shou'd awaken all Masters, Ministers, and Magistrates, narrowly to watch, and speedily to curb the first Beginnings and least Tendencies of a Crime of this Nature. Persons in these relative Stations might do a great deal of Good this way, wou'd they but set to the Work with Sincerity, Constancy, and Zeal.

First, Then I apply my self to Masters of Families, as very much concern'd in carrying on and effecting such a desirable Regulation.

The Answer of *Lycurgus*, as we receive it from *Plutarch*, to One who gave his Opinion about the Alteration of the State of *Sparta*, is very true in the present Case of Reformation, *Sir, begin it in your own House.* For Kingdoms consist of private Families; and if Masters wou'd not only give good Examples themselves, but make use of their Authority, and command their Children and Servants to attend them every Lord's Day to the House of God, it wou'd be at once a Blessed Sight, and an universal Reformation might naturally ensue. This to be sure is plac'd in their Power, God requires

quires it at their Hands, 'tis the best Exercise of their just Authority, it wou'd imprint right Notions of the Divine Excellencies, and shed a most happy Influence upon a whole Neighbourhood. Whole Families may go to Church when the Head pleases, Observations may be made of their decent Behaviour there, Children corrected for talking, playing, or doing any thing amiss, Servants changed when they will not be religiously govern'd; David's Resolution with a Change of the Vice pursu'd, *There shall no prophane Person dwell in my House, he that will not go to Church shall not tarry in my Sight.* Thus resolv'd and thus employ'd, we may arrive to the Happiness of Cornelius the Centurion, who had a Devout Soldier continually waiting upon him, and become eminently remarkable for a regular Family. What has been done may be done. And what the World sees is done, and done too to very good Effect, will never more be thought impracticable, but well deserve Esteem and Imitation.

If Family Instruction and Family Prayers both before and afterwards, be join'd to this decent Attendance upon God in publick, the *Lord's Day* will be kept intirely

irely Holy. But the Improvements that can be made in Christian Knowledge and Practice will be very small, all other Attempts for the Religious Observation of the Lord's Day, will be but weak and imperfect, if we do not rule our own Houses well, and the Principles of Religion be not seriously taught at home. I am very sensible of the singular Benefits and Advantages flowing from Religious and Well-ordered Families, the *wise Neglect* of this kind of Duties has very much contributed to the Growth of Profane-ness, and the *vigorous Revival* of them wou'd again as highly advance Christian Piety. Whatever may be the Thoughts of some vain Persons in these Matters; however they may call such a Virtuous Care by the Names of *Cast* and *Supersti-tion*, sure I am, those who consider things aright, will find infinite Obligations to it, from the many Divine Precepts, from the Examples of the Anti-diluvian Patriarchs, from the Patterns of *Abraham*, *Joshua*, and all other Wise and Good Men in the Jewish, Heathen, and Christian State, who in their several Ages and Generations took care that they and theirs might serve the Lord.

Let me therefore as effectually persuade as I heartily intreat all those, whom the Providence of God has plac'd in that relative State, to feed the Souls committed to their Care, that they may grow in Grace and Knowledge; that they may prove Blessings to their Country. Let your Houses become the Chappels of your God, perfum'd with the daily Incense of Devotion, that all within your Walls may have the Opportunity to receive Salvation. Let your Houses be made as it were, the Schools of God and his Son Christ, where the Being of a God, the Immortality of the Soul, a future Judgment, Rewards, and Punishments in another State, and the Commands and Prohibitions both of the Law and Gospel, shall be gradually instill'd and clearly known. Separate your selves from the profane Absenters from Divine Worship, and give this resolute Answer to their daring Practice; *Josb. xxiv. 15.* If it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, chuse you this Day whom you will serve. But as for me and my House we will serve the Lord. So will you honour God, derive a publick Benefit upon Society, by the effectual Propagation of Religion.

Secondly,

Secondly, I apply my self to the Order of the Clergy.

And you, my Reverend and Learned Brethren, from whom I am always willing to learn, I humbly presume with the utmost Deference to ~~put~~ in remembrance, though ye know these things and be establish'd in the present Truth. One of the Best Titles which the Holy Ghost bestows on us, and which includes an Honourable Trust, is, that we are Embassadors for Christ: The Nature of an Embassy obliges to act for the Dignity and Support of the Prince. Now the more religiously the Lord's Day is kept, the fuller our Congregations are at that time, and the more Reverence the People demonstrate upon that Occasion, the more highly do we advance the Dignity of our Heavenly Sovereign, whom we represent amongst Men. Ministerial Authority levell'd at such an End, is an Exercise suitable to our exalted Station, and worthy of that Vocation wherewith we are called. Being we are Ministers of Christ, and the Messengers of the Lord of Hosts, if we suffer his Worship to be defac'd, his Day profan'd, and his Perfections vilify'd, nay if we do not contrive with all our

our Thought, and Execute with all our Power, so have them had in Reverence of all that are round about us, we sink below our Authority and undoubtedly betray our Trust. When we come Home to our Lord and are examin'd upon our *Christian Embassy*, the Neglect or Abuse of our Authority will be the Prologue to a sad Account, and lead the Way to a severe Degree of Punishment. *He that knew his Lord's Will and prepared not himself to do it, shall be Beaten with many Stripes.* and is
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no Vigorous Endeavours for a Regulation in this kind will not only be agreeable to the Authority we have receiv'd from God, but we cannot maintain our Character in the World without it. We have many Eyes upon us, many severe Examiners of our Actions. Wicked Men in the Church, and Dissenters from the Church, narrowly watch our Steps, and wou'd no doubt Rejoice at our Halting. The not observing the *Lord's Day* with Strictness by our own Religious Examples, and the not Promoting it in our People by our Wise and Pious Admonitions, must lodge an ill Opinion in the Mind and open their Mouths against us. What can they say or think, that shall be tolerable, when they see us so Negligent of the Worship of

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of our God. But when we Answer what our Post and this Day requires, we stop the Mouths of evil Doers, Man can't Accuse us, God will Bless us, we shall rejoice in the Testimony of our Conscience, the Ministerial Office will be highly Esteem'd, and our Revenues no longer thought too much for our Labours. Then Calumnies, Fears, and Difficulties, will not so sensibly Affect us, naked Truth will be Pursu'd with a firmer Zeal, and Heaven will be found our Guide and Guard amidst the different Changes of the Church Militant upon Earth. So long as we call ourselves, as indeed we are, the Ministers of God, it wou'd be Preposterous not to take Care of Divine Worship. It can scarce be imagin'd to what Height of Decency this may be carry'd by a Pious Minister and a well govern'd People. The Discharge of such Duties will be agreeable to our Vows, Oaths, Subscriptions and Declarations, and not only redound to the Glory of God, but prove Com-mendable in the Sight of Man. Whatever a Man's Station be, an honest and careful Industry to perform the Duties and Answer the End of it, will meet with

with real Esteem and Respect. Tho' we have too much Reason to complain of the Contempt of our Office: Yet notwithstanding the Prophaneness of the Age, I cannot but think, a Wise, Prudent, Virtuous, and Pious Minister will be highly Valu'd amongst Men of Sense and Conscience, and amongst those too who are no great Favourers nor Votaries of Religion. There is a Lustre attends him, Reverence is paid him, and Reputation follows him. Scarce One in a Hundred that Censures our Function, makes any Distinction between the *Person* and *Office* of the Clergy. Such dry Reasoning tho' undoubtedly True, will never be Prevailing. If we be Careless in our Duty, or Immoral in our Lives, it is not in the Power of the Sacredness of our Office to Shelter us from Contempt. To take Sanctuary in our Cloth, as the *only* Argument for Reverence to our Persons, is Weak and Indecent, and betrays some kind of Suspicion in our Thoughts; how little we Deserve it upon other Accounts. An Irreligious Divine is one of the most justly despis'd Persons in the World. The best Course we can possibly observe to maintain a good Name, and Convince our Parishioners of the Value of their precious and immortal

immortal Souls, must be by the particular Care we take of God's Honour and of our own Salvation. When we Prescribe no other Rules but what we observe our selves and relate to the Exaltation of the Divine Perfections, a double Weight is given to our Words, and we the more attentively Regarded. And our Actions so exactly answering our Principles, we take the most effectual Care to propagate Religion, and settle Minds in the Faith, and Advance our Character in the World.

As the Authority we have receiv'd from God Commands, and the Character we expect from Man Requires, this strict Observation of the *Lord's Day*: So the general Ends of our Office cannot so well be compass'd any other way. We are set as Watchmen over our Flocks, and made Stewards in God's Household. By us the Good are to be secur'd, and the Bad reclaim'd; the Despairing comforted, and the Presumptuous alarm'd; the Ignorant instructed, and the Knowing improv'd; the Obstinate is to be melted down, and we must Wait to the last Degree of Meekness for their Amendment. But what time can we apprehend, what time will be Proper for the Accomplishing

shing such pious Designs, such necessary Ends. In the Week Days our People are involv'd in secular Affairs, and have then perhaps as little *Inclination* too as *Leisure* for, hearing you Discourse of Religious Matters. Tho' indeed *the Mouth of the Righteous is exercis'd in Wisdom, and his Tongue will be talking of Judgment,* and no Opportunities shou'd be omitted for the Establishing the Belief and Practice of God's Truth: Yet the *Lord's Day, is the most proper Season for the Sowing of our Spiritual Seed.* Because that time is already look'd on by our People to be set Apart for that End; our People, laying aside all Worldly Business, then come with Disposed and Serious Tempers to attend to the Word of God; and many of them cou'd not, at least so frequently, receive Divine Instruction in any other Place but the Church. And therefore, since the Ends of our Office in a great Measure stand or fall with the Observance or Prophanation of this Day, a real Intention fully to Discharge our Duty to our People, shou'd engage us to have it observ'd with the strictest Care. It will not be sufficient for us to say, *Our Church Doors are open, we are there to Officiate, and the People may come if they please.*

Please. But moved with an earnest Desire of saving Souls, we must press with all possible Warmth, that they ought to come, that they heinously Sin by staying away. Except they will remember and observe to keep this Day Holy unto the Lord, our Praying cannot Profit them, our Preaching will be in Vain, they will yet continue in their Sins.

Knowing to whom now I make my Address, I will not, need not, use any farther Enlargement; and what I have already Hinted, is not offer'd by Way of Design to Inform the Understanding, but Refresh the Memory. There is only one thing that Remains, which I beg Leave to touch upon, as an additional Encouragement to answer our Obligations in this Matter. The Corruptions of Mankind have made it Necessary for Humane Governours to interpose in the Cause of God and Virtue; the Laws of the Land are Open and Severe against the Prophanation of the *Lord's Day*, and several other Vices; there are some faithful Magistrates distinguish'd by a noble Spirit, and Animated with a Christian Zeal to effect what God and Man requires to be done; and we ought

thankfully

thankfully to accept of their Assistance, and heartily join with them in that Work which is so Eminent ours. Whilst they Contrive, whilst they Endeavour, to make our Duty Easy and the Nation Vertuous, let a Pious Gratitude inspire our Souls to tell abroad their Praises and their Pains.

In my own private Judgement a Recourse to Punishment shou'd be one of the *last Methods* us'd with an habitual Offender. And I dare be sure to affirm, it wou'd be a feeling Joy to our Selves, as well as an Instance of Goodness in our People, if calm and serious Applications did prevail over the Mind, melt the Heart, and form in the Soul Holy Resolutions. But if Obstinate will be Proof against Argument; and Mildness fail of Conquering the Will, if Men will throw Perswasions behind their Backs, and violently run to commit Iniquity against the Laws, against the Threatnings, against the Warnings of Heaven and Earth, we may, we ought to sound the Trumpet, and bid 'em, be Afraid, for the Magistrate neither does nor shou'd bear the Sword in Vain. If after all that is set before them, Men will not Hear nor Fear, nor Cease from

these

these Abominations, if in Contempt of all the Laws both of God and Man, they will daringly proceed to Profane this Holy Day; 'tis Noble and Christian in the Religious Magistrates to set them Free from their Mistakes, and make them know and do their Duty by a faithful Execution of the Penal Laws, till they learn not to Offend. But I will not here entirely Prevent my humble Application

Thirdly, To the Worthy Magistrates concern'd in this Cause of God.

In disclosing my own Thoughts with Reference to our selves I may safely as well as seasonably say, what all Wise and Good Men do too sadly own, That the Growth of Impiety, Prophaneness and Immorality in this Nation, where the Light of the Gospel has Shin'd for many Ages, but in late Years with a brighter Lustre, is a Blot in our Fame and a Discredit to our Kingdom, and will prove our Unhappiness and Ruin, if the Contagion be not Prevented. If the Pulpit or the Press had been ingeniously listen'd to, Bounds had been fix'd to this over-flowing Tide from the undaunted Zeal of Divines, and o-

ther

their pious Men of the Laity. But some have commenc'd to so high a Degree of Impiety, that rational Arguments, Love, and the Principles of Vertue, are too Weak to Work upon their Tempters, will no more sway the Passions, nor cool the Rage of Vicious Natures, than the Strains of Rhetorick allay the Noise of a threatening Tempest. Hence it became Necessary for the Secular Powers to Interpose, and super-add their own Edicts and Commands with New and Temporary Sanctions, to Establish the Divine Laws more Firm and Inviolable, and enforce a Compliance to what is Regular. That so, such as will not retain God in their Thoughts nor consider the Rewards and Punishments of another Life, may be influenc'd to a Sense and Practice of what is Good, when they see that they disobey Men as well as God, and are Expos'd to the Severities of the Laws in this World, as well as the Eternal Punishments in the next. It is to you Gentlemen to whom it is now committed to be done. Matters being brought to this Head, and Religious Laws put into your Power to execute, upon you, Gentlemen, our Eyes are fix'd, and from you the World expects the Redress of Prophane Grievances.

Grievances. And if I may be hear'd; as a proposing Petitioner, I humbly Conceive, the Beginning with a strict Observation of the *Lord's Day* will strike at the Root of scandalous Vices, the Number of Offenders in other kinds by this Means will be lessen'd, and the Work of Reformation in General found more Easy. Against the Vicious Prophanations of the *Lord's Day* there are Laws already in Force, the Executive Part of the Laws is committed to your Care; a Law had as good never have been made as be never executed, and without Execution the Terrore of a Law dwindles into nothing, for where there is nothing felt, nothing will be fear'd, and therefore some Examples of Notorious Offenders, made Remarkable by their Punishments, will cause others also to fear.

There are very powerful Obligations for such an Exercise of your Authority. The Solemnity of an Oath, the End of a Commission, the Honour of God Almighty, the Commands of the Queen, and the Security of the State, are strong Motives to a Vigorous Zeal: An Oath is too sacred a Matter to be trifled with, the End of a Trust must Conscienciously

conscientiously be answer'd, God's Honour is always to be promoted, the Queen's Injunctions for ever to be obey'd, and a sinking Nation to be preserv'd from Ruine. To these you may add the Reverence you will gain to your own Purples, the Comfort you will find in your own Conscience, the Charity you will shew to your Offending Brother, and the brighter Crown, the more glorious Inheritance you will insure in Heaven.

Convinc'd then by such Arguments, and moved with these Considerations, let neither the Oppositions of those that are Wicked, nor the Censures of those that are Lukewarm, nor the cowardly Neutrality of some under Worldly Views, from whom other Measures might reasonably be expected, discourage your Attempts. You have the best Cause in the World, for you stand up for God and Religion against Evil-Doers. You have Reason and Truth on your Side, and therefore be not sinfully modest in a good Cause, when the Wicked are so abominably impudent in a bad one. Can you see your God abus'd, his Laws trampled on, Sin glory'd in, your Country tottering and expos'd

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expos'd to Divine Vengeance, and not endeavour out of Love to your Brethren, out of Love to the Publick, to bring 'em from their dangerous Vices? I wou'd persuade my self, you cannot, will not suffer things to be carry'd to this unhappy Height.

But shou'd some Examples be produc'd to conclude me under an unhappy Mistake, and baulk my too forward Expectation, I only desire to ease my Mind of this one Truth; That if a Magistrate winks at those Vices he is oblig'd to correct, either through Fear or Favour, or because he stands Guilty of the same Crimes himself, if by his Words, Countenance, or Carriage, he gives Encouragement to any Man either to begin or continue a wicked Course of Living, he becomes accessory to his Brother's Iniquities, doubles a Nation's Guilt, and hastens the Ruin of a People. Even Gallio in the *Acts of the Apostles*, an Heathen Governour, how careless soever in determining against Christ upon some nice and disputable Points in the Jewish Law, did plainly declare to the Jews, That if it was a Matter of Wrong, and wicked Lewdness, there was

was a great deal of Reason for him to hear them. But if any *Christian Magistrate* careth for none of those things, which *Gallio* would have heard; sleeps securely in the Chair of Honour, unmindful of the Virtues or Vices of his People, whatever private Excellencies may advance his Character, by such a Remissness he certainly betrays his Trust, and stands accountable to God and the Government for all the Mischiefs consequent thereupon.

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